WOMAN IN WORLD HISTORY

HER PLACE IN THE GREAT RELIGIONS

BY

E.M. WHITE

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WOMAN IN WORLD HISTORY: HER PLACE IN THE GREAT RELIGIONS

WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT.

In this comprehensive study the authoress has ransacked the ages and roamed the world to trace woman's influence in the story of civilisation, with special reference to the great religions and to their effect on the position of womanhood. As the term religion has been taken in its broadest sense, it has included all the social and artistic spheres which each religion has touched, and therefore the book covers nearly all the field of woman's history. The aim has been appreciation before criticism, and the conclusions reached are neither anti-man nor anti-feminist.

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HER PLACE IN THE GREAT RELIGIONS

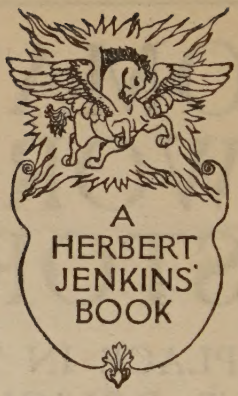
BY
E. M. WHITE

Author of "The Philosophy of Citizenship," etc.

BL
458
W5
1924

HERBERT JENKINS LIMITED
3 YORK STREET ST. JAMES'S
LONDON S.W.1 ⊛ ⊛ MCMXXIV

1924



Printed in Great Britain by Wyman & Sons Ltd., London, Reading and Fakenham

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To the Friend Who Aided
My Thought

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INTRODUCTION

Term religion used in its widest connotation, including not only the life and sayings of founder or the sacred writings, but also institutions, legends, ritual.

Other aspects besides religion to be taken into consideration, such as geographic and economic conditions.

Sources used have been :

(*a*) Sayings and actions of founders of religions.
(*b*) Sacred books.
(*c*) Legends, poetry, customs, institutions.
(*d*) Conditions of life, thought and habit at present time of those following the religions.

Aim has been unprejudiced interpretation and appreciation ; criticism only secondary. All conclusions based on facts.

THROUGHOUT the following chapters the term *religion* is used in its widest connotation, as meaning far more than a creed ; for the Bible is not all the Christian faith, nor the Koran all Islam. In all spheres and aspects of life, " It is done," is as valuable and vital as " It is written." A religion, therefore, not only includes the life and sayings of the founder or, if no founder is known, the sacred writings which form the basis and authority of the religion, but it also includes the customs, institutions, ritual and legends that have grown about the religion. Perhaps these constitute more of the religion in a popular sense than the " texts " which preceded them.

Only by studying the tendencies and influences of a religion, as well as its originating forces, can an adequate view be obtained of it, or a fair judgment

formed of its value as a factor in civilisation. And the conditions existent at the time that a religion is permeating them also act upon it, and are themselves reacted upon ; so geographic and economic aspects must be taken into consideration as well. Indeed, no religion can be regarded purely as such, or separated from the people living in the different periods of its growth. For instance, another way of saying that Hinduism affected this or that, is to say that the Hindus held this or that idea at the time. Humanity is greater than any or all of its religions.

Religion as it affects women, or is affected by them, is not a subject in itself, but an aspect of the great story of life on earth. All other conditions intermingle with the religion to determine woman's status, and such intermingling occurs throughout life and psychology. The very religions themselves did not follow one another in time, but in some cases developed contemporaneously. This fact has caused a difficulty in the arrangement of the chapters that follow ; Judaism, for instance, should, for some reasons, immediately precede Christianity, but the Christianity of Europe was more profoundly affected by the olden Greek and Roman cults, as the very name, Roman Catholicism, indicates. Yet the existence of such a problem emphasises the intermingling of the factors concerned in the oneness of humanity's progress.

In judging the position of women, and the interaction between them and a religion, four sources have been used :*

(*a*) The sayings and actions of the founders—Jesus, or Buddha, or Mohammed.

* The exception has been in dealing with Primitive Times where no such sources are available, and conjecture must take their place.

(*b*) The words of the sacred books, such as the Law in Judaism, or the Vedas in Hinduism.

(*c*) The evidence given by legend, poetry, customs, and institutions owing their origin to the religion.

(*d*) The conditions of life, thought, and habit existing at present in the places where the religion flourishes.

A general view has thus been obtained of the connection between womanhood and a religion, both as to the effect of the latter upon the status, outlook and character of women, and to the influence of the former upon the interpretation, forms and propagation of the religion. The method throughout has been, not criticism so much as understanding and appreciation.

Some exponents of most living religions are nowadays glorifying the part their own creed has played in elevating womanhood, and are depreciating what other religions have effected in that respect. But in this study the aim has been fairness to all and unprejudiced interpretation for all. To enter into the spirit of each religion and to record what is found, impartially with regard to all, but sympathetically with regard to each, is the only method yielding approximate truth. Unless such important realms of thought and feeling, of devotion and ideals, are studied with the desire to find the point of view of the believer, little understanding will be obtained. Just as children yield neither their best nor their truest selves except in an appreciative atmosphere, so in these more complex regions, the doors of temples and shrines unlock only with the key of appreciation. Criticism is secondary to interpretation, as the spirit of destruction is below that of construction. The time for the depreciation of religions has gone by, and the mid-nineteenth century

Rationalists who saw no use or good in Christianity during the ages when it flourished, are now out of date. Denial of doctrines need not imply that the beliefs were always harmful or worthless. Humanity has grasped after the best it could see at the time; to grudge praise to the splendours and civilising force of a bygone faith is to betray dullness of insight, if not narrowness of view.

It is possible to appraise value to customs of the past that would now be abominable, and with regard to the examples of such that occur in some chapters, the following points must be remembered:

(*a*) Environment has greatly changed in almost every department of life during twenty and more centuries.

(*b*) Sensitiveness of soul has largely developed, and the actors in those far-away dramas were oblivious to many subtleties of feeling and habit now generally experienced and followed.

(*c*) We have to consider not what moderns think *ought* to have been done, but what the ancients did actually do, and to find causes and explanations.

(*d*) Women acquiesced in much that they would now resent. The women of olden or mediæval times did not think and feel and act as a twentieth century woman would do in similar circumstances.

During the five years' research work undertaken for the compilation of this book, conclusions have always been based on facts; dreams and theories are useless unless truth is their foundation. Our eyes may look unto the hills of the Ideal, but in order to reach them our feet must tread the road of basic fact. In other words, the true idealist is a realist as well. Much depends on what is looked for, and if a student starts

with the idea that woman has been suppressed throughout the ages, he will find facts to support his case, but only by passing by other facts as important, and sometimes more important. By giving consideration, however, to what was thought at the time by the women concerned, a more accurate judgment can be obtained. The views of extremists have been noticed, but not given undue prominence, and isolated cases or sayings have been considered of less value than the opinions or actions of the average mass. The normal —in men as well as women—is the standard, though exceptional cases of greatness should always be taken into account.

The whole has been regarded from the standpoint of a more advanced civilisation, that could detect not only accomplished facts, but also promises of development unseen at the time. Thus relative values have been assigned; and ideas, customs and institutions have been considered in view of the standards and opinions of their own period. For such a complex study the most adequate criteria to apply to the results are:

(*a*) Would men and women of experience and common sense, belonging to each age under discussion, have regarded the description of their own times as a faithful record?

(*b*) Are present-day broadminded followers of each living religion satisfied that a true representation of their faith has been made?

(*c*) Does the philosopher who sees life steadily, and sees it whole, express approval?

By these three methods of judgment only can the worth of the study be estimated.

WOMAN IN WORLD HISTORY

HER PLACE IN THE GREAT RELIGIONS

CHAPTER I

PRIMITIVE TIMES

No certainty of woman's position, and therefore we conjecture from present day savages, conditions in early times, and woman's instincts and tendencies.—Religious factor cannot be separated from the geographic, economic, social, and other factors.—All results, habits, institutions, etc., were formed unconsciously, and no theories as to woman arose.—Motherhood gave woman different qualities and duties, especially attitude of protection.—Earliest objects of worship were feminine.—Instances.—Labour shared, and woman was the agriculturist.—Instances.—Growth of conception of rice mother, corn mother, etc.—Rites in connection with agriculture.—Magic power in woman.—Priestesses.—Witchcraft.—Woman's physique, intuition, and sexual power over man may have given rise to sense of mystery.—Matriarchy and its meaning.—Exogamy.—Totemism.—Closeness of husband and wife.—Spheres of men and women moulded unconsciously.—Woman weaves her own destiny.

IN the dawn of history, when only stray gleams of light show what was, it is not possible to do more than catch glimpses of woman as such; from these glimpses a few facts can be inferred and

an endeavour made to interpret their significance. When so little is known in certainty of the human race in primitive times and of the beginnings of religion, to separate one sex from the other, even to distinguish them, is a task of extreme difficulty, requiring an insight almost superhuman. We can only attempt to guess, aided by what we know of present day savages, who have been called the "modern witnesses of primitive humanity"*; by what we can gather of the conditions and environment in the days of the "forest primeval"; by what we understand of woman's primitive instincts and tendencies; and by what we see of the results reached regarding woman's position and the conception of her duties in early historical times.

As we proceed in our study it will be found that it is difficult to separate the religious factor from the geographic, the economic, the social and others, conditioning the human race; for they all intermingle and form a complex environment which influences as a whole. In the earliest times, however, it is impossible to distinguish religion from the other factors that combined to form in the primitive mind some coherence out of the chaos of impressions and forces and mysteries surrounding it. Religion has been defined as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things . . . which unite into one moral community called a Church all those who adhere to them."† But this is too definite for the religion of primitive times, which mingled sacred and profane, spiritual and material, real and unreal, supernatural and natural, dreams, fantasies and imagination with facts and experiences, in bewildering confusion.

* By A. L. Cureau, in *Savage Man in Central Africa.*
† By E. Durkheim, in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.*

Therefore it will be sufficient to take a general view of conditions and beliefs to see how they affected women, and how woman's nature, all unconsciously to either sex, determined her position and influence. All results, habits and institutions were unconsciously formed in early days ; there was no deliberate planning for domination, and no glimmer of knowledge as to psychological differences of sex, nor of the relative values that should be assigned to men's and women's mentality. The same is true of savages at the present day. " In tropical Africa there is not yet the first notion of the part which the female mentality plays."*

If any did ponder on conditions, the capacity that enabled them to meditate on the facts would also enable them to perceive their inevitability, as in the case of the Kaffir woman mentioned by Olive Schreiner :†

> " I had a conversation with a Kafir woman still in her untouched primitive condition. . . . She was a woman whom I cannot think of otherwise than as a person of genius. In language more eloquent and intense than I have ever heard from the lips of any other woman, she painted the condition of the women of her race ; the labour of women, the anguish of woman as she grew older, and the limitations of her life closed in about her, her sufferings under the condition of polygamy and subjection ; all this she painted with a passion and intensity I have not known equalled ; and yet, and this was the interesting point, when I went on to question her, combined with a deep and almost fierce bitterness against life and the unseen powers which had shaped woman and her conditions as they were, there was not one word of bitterness against the individual man, nor any will or intention to revolt ; rather there was a stern and almost majestic attitude of acceptance of the inevitable ; life and the conditions of her race being what they were."

* A. L. Cureau, in *Savage Man in Central Africa.*

† The extract is from the Introduction to her *Woman and Labour.*

Throughout the development of the woman spirit there have been certain basic factors influencing the direction from the beginning, and of these the fact of motherhood has been the chief. That was the distinction of sex which the primitive mind must have first made—a woman became a mother; and this necessitated different treatment for her and gave her different duties. Her physique determined she should not fight as man did, and she became less fierce than he; her maternity endowed her with the protecting habit that kept her as the guardian of her children. In the earliest days probably this care lasted only until the children could take care of themselves, but the attitude of protection became part of her nature.

The prolonged infancy of the helpless human baby was one of the causes of the establishment of the family, when it was once realised that a man as well as a woman produced the child, and when the woman had induced the man to remain with her, either through her usefulness to him on account of her work, or by acting on his jealousy in possession of her.* And with the establishment of the family began human civilisation, for it meant cohesion, and so the beginnings of social life;† it meant the recognition of duties to others, and so the dawn of morality.

The earliest worship was probably given to feminine deities as producers of life. It has been thought that "perhaps the first object of worship would seem to have been the cowrie shell. A personal deity emerged, a goddess, when in process of time this shell was personified."‡ The Aztecs and Peruvians regarded the

* Or in some other way. How she did it is obscure, but she did do it.

† Comte has called the family "the eternal school of social life."

‡ See *Givers of Life*, by M. A. Canney.

whole earth as the Mother, and worshipped her as such.* Barren wives made pilgrimage to a certain cave on a hill which was looked upon as the womb of the earth whence issued the first men. The Maori have a legend† of Heaven as the father and Earth as the Mother, who are rent asunder. The Caribs say their ancestor created his offspring by sowing the soil with stones, and when earthquakes occur they regard the phenomenon as their mother earth dancing. A tribe of the North American Indians call on the Earth as their mother and rest on her bosom when lying on it.

> "All living creatures proceed from the earth; all are sustained by the earth; all are finally reduced to dust and return to the earth. Her motherhood in aboriginal America was no mere figure of speech, but an article of positive belief."‡

There are many other myths in which the Earth is a divinely honoured person, and the honour reflects on the real mother whose function created the myth. Thus, in the code of morals enjoined on youths at initiation among the natives of Torres Straits, the last one is: "Do not speak bad word to mother."§

Beyond the fact of motherhood the differentiation of the sexes was not pronounced, and the conditions of existence made food-getting, and safety from enemies, the absorbing things of life.‖ Here the labour was shared: the man obtained flesh foods through hunting, and fought the enemies, animal and human; the woman cultivated the ground, and grew cereals, vegetables and herbs. And before settlements

* *Myths of the New World*, by D. G. Brinton.
† Narrated by E. B. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture*.
‡ Payne's *History of the New World called America*.
§ *Magic in Names*, by E. Clodd.
‖ See *The Family in its Sociological Aspect*, by J. Q. Dealey.

were made, when tribes wandered in search of hunting grounds or pastures, the man in his capacity as hunter and defender would carry his weapon only, so as to be free to attack or defend, leaving the woman to bear the other burdens or carry the child. This custom has sometimes been taken to mean laziness on the part of the man, and the enslavement of the woman, but it was not so, for the safety of the group depended on the man's freedom of movement and constant watchfulness. It is true that this division of duties necessitated the woman having the more tiring (though less dangerous) part, but it was not a deliberate imposition of the strong upon the weak.

Nor, when tribes settled down, was it a deliberate imposition that women should be responsible for the agricultural work. The men would clear the ground and carry home the harvest, but all the processes between would be worked at by the women, while the men hunted or made frays on their neighbours. Even before ground was cultivated women would dig up and collect wild plants, seeds and roots. In South Africa, British East Africa, the Lower Congo, and South America all the agriculture is done by women,* and in Central Africa at the present day the wife represents the whole of agriculture, and almost the whole of the arts and manufactures. She is designated "the architect of her husband's future prosperity."†

It is not surprising, therefore, that when customs were perpetuated, myths arose, rites were established, and goddesses were worshipped, this occupation of woman should be represented. There was formed a conception of a series of "Mothers"—in India a

* See Chapter IV of *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, by Sir J. G. Frazer.

† By A. L. Cureau, in *Savage Man in Central Africa.*

rice mother and a cotton mother, in Europe a corn mother, in America a maize mother, and rites and festivals were held in honour of them.* "Why did the Greeks personify the corn as a goddess rather than a god?" asks Sir J. G. Frazer,† and answers by saying that the breaking up of the soil, the digging and planting and weeding, was done by women; and the corn mother, in the folk-lore of Europe, who is supposed to be present at the harvest, is analogous to the Greek Demeter, and the Bona Dea of the Romans.‡

An ingenious theory has been propounded by Rendel Harris§ that the Greek goddesses Artemis and Aphrodite had their origin in plants tended in medicinal gardens by women, Artemis being Artemisia, or the Mugwort:

> "... the plant is Artemis and Artemis is the plant. Artemis is a woman's goddess and a maid's goddess, because she was a woman's medicine and a maid's medicine. If the medicine is good at childbirth, then the witch-doctress who uses it becomes the priestess of a goddess, and the plant is projected into a deity. ...
>
> "Aphrodite is a personification of the mandrake or love-apple. She holds this in her hand in the form of fruit and wears it round her waist, or perhaps as an armlet, in the form of a girdle in which the root of the plant is entwined. Whether she had a herb garden in which the plant was cherished is doubtful. ... The apple the goddess holds in her hand in certain great works of art, is a substitute for the primitive apple-of-love [mandrake]."

Various rites all over the world connected with rice-planting and growing show how the primitive woman's

* See *Animism: the Seed of Religion*, by E. Clodd.

† In *The Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*.

‡ It is of interest in the present day to note that the worship of the Roman Bona Dea prepared the way for the worship of Mary the Madonna. The churches of La Bonne Dame at Le Puy and Notre Dame at Arles have replaced temples of the Earth Mother, or Bona Dea. See Clodd's *Animism*.

§ In *The Ascent of Olympus*.

labour, and even a mystic influence, are perpetuated. Among the Kayans in Borneo each family possesses a consecrated field, and at a festival before the sowing a priestess enters it with men and girls following her. The men dig holes and the girls plant rice seeds while the priestess croons prayers.* In Sumatra the rice is sown by women, who in sowing it let their hair loose so that the rice may grow luxuriantly and have long stalks, and they do similarly in Mexico at the sowing of maize.† Mr. C. J. White has described‡ the spring ceremony of blessing the rice fields which he witnessed in April, 1905. Summoned by a sweet-toned gong, a long procession of men and women winds down the hill-side from the houses, to the first rice field, into which water has been running all day before. The next field is dry, and the people sit there having light refreshments. Suddenly the men spring up and throw off their outer garments, the women rush to the irrigated field for mud clods, which they throw at the men attacking them. A sham fight follows in good humour, amid the mud and water—an emblem of the struggle with the evil forces of nature. Gradually the women drive the men down the whole length of the field, and all the men go off it. The victory of the women portends, during the coming season, the fertility of the soil and the increase of flocks. All the company then return home rejoicing.

Not only are women supposed to influence the growth of plants, but they can also cause rain by ploughing or pretending to plough in water, as they do in the Caucasus, in Armenia, and in Bengal. The Arabs of Moab, when rain is desired, dress a dummy and call

* Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Vol. I.
† *Ibid.*
‡ In his book, *Sikkim and Bhutan.*

it the " Mother of the Rain," which a woman carries in a procession, and sings :

" O Mother of the Rain, O Immortal, moisten our sleeping seeds,
Moisten the sleeping seeds of the Sheik who is ever generous.
She is gone, the Mother of the Rain, to bring the storm ; when she comes back the crops are high as the walls.
She is gone, the Mother of the Rain, to bring the winds ; when she comes back the plantations have attained the height of lances.
She is gone, the Mother of the Rain, to bring the thunders ; when she comes back the crops are high as camels."*

Woman is again the agriculturist " at the spring festival of the Chinese Empire at its truly greatest—no military empire, but an agricultural patriarchate and matriarchate—in which the Emperor in the peasant's yellow, now appropriately the imperial colour, drives the first furrow of the spring ; while the Empress, again typical peasant-woman, walks beside the furrow and plants the first row of Soya beans."† The spring was also " brought in " by rites among the Mediterranean peoples, and usually the season is represented by a girl, or it is girls who are the chief actors in the ceremonies. At Elis in Greece the women in spring-time stood in front of the temple singing songs to the bull which symbolised the fruitfulness of the earth :

" In Springtime, O Dionysos,
To thy holy temple come ;
To Elis with thy Graces,
Rushing with thy bull-foot come
Noble bull, noble bull."‡

The graces mentioned in the song were also three

* Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Part I.
† Patrick Geddes, in *The Masque of Ancient Learning*.
‡ See Miss Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*.

women, garlanded and bedecked like the Queen of the May in mediæval times, who herself was a link with primitive magic. Thus in rituals that became more fixed and ordered woman had her share in the primitive arts of dance and music.

Priestesses carried out the magic rites for ensuring good crops connected with the worship of Demeter and Persephone, and from times before history a certain power of magic and sense of mystery has been associated with women. With the Dyaks of Borneo at first all the priestly caste were women ; and among the American-Indian tribe of the Algonquins the medicine women hold an exalted rank in their religious mysteries.* Among the Druids in Britain there were three classes of Druidesses : those who performed offices about the temples, and were not separated from their families ; those who assisted the Druids in religious services, and visited their husbands occasionally ; and those who formed a sisterhood dwelling in seclusion. Of the last an instance is the sisterhood at Kildare in Ireland, who devoted themselves to the service of Brighit,† the goddess of poverty, medicine, and smiths. These Druidesses preserved a holy fire, always burning.‡

In such far-apart regions as Sweden, Peru, Egypt, and Babylon women have been married to gods, and have had connection with no man ; and on the coast of West Africa human wives of gods are common.§ These instances tend to show that there was something in woman worthy of a god. Sometimes the woman is " possessed " by a divine being, and among the

* D. G. Brinton, *The Religions of Primitive Peoples.*

† Afterwards the Christian St. Bridget.

‡ See *The Veil o Isis : the Mysteries of the Ancient Druids*, by W. Winwood Reade.

§ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Part II.

Siamese it is believed that the gods speak through the mouth of some chosen woman.* The natives of the Marquesas Islands and of Samoa say that the god Supa ordained in the Council of Creation that the life of man should be like a torch, which, when blown out, cannot be lighted again, but that a woman's soul should live always.† This may symbolise the continuance of the woman's life through her children, in the days before fatherhood was known. That a woman has something sacred about her is believed by the Hottentots when they think that a man can take no higher oath than to swear by his elder sister. The ancient Teutonic tribes went even further in their reverence for women, as Tacitus bears evidence, and the instance which follows is a survival of such reverence :

> "The ancient Germans believed there was something holy in women, and accordingly consulted them as oracles. Their sacred women, we are told, looked on the eddying rivers, and listened to the murmur or the roar of the water, and from the sight and sound foretold what would come to pass. But often the veneration of the men went further, and they worshipped women as true and living goddesses. For example, in the reign of Vespasian, a certain Valeda, of the tribe of the Bructeri, was commonly held to be a deity, and in that character reigned over her people, her sway being acknowledged far and wide. She lived in a tower on the river Lippe, a tributary of the Rhine. When the people of Cologne sent to make a treaty with her, the ambassadors were not admitted to her presence; the negotiations were conducted through a minister who acted as the mouthpiece of her divinity, and reported her oracular utterances. The example shows how easily among our rude forefathers the ideas of divinity and royalty coalesced."‡

* Compare the Delphic oracle of historical times. See the chapter on Ancient Greece.

† D. G. Brinton, *The Religions of Primitive Peoples.*

‡ Quoted from Tacitus by Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Part I.

The magic powers of women were not always thought to be beneficent, as the terrible annals of witchcraft show, and often some woman suffered punishment for a natural event totally unconnected with herself. For instance, the Bechuanas and the Kaffir tribes have no idea of any man dying except from hunger, violence or witchcraft.* It has been suggested that the mediæval belief in witchcraft was a survival of the Stone Age. Then the new metal, iron, would be regarded as wonderful and good, and therefore it would be harmful to the evil represented by witches. That is why in the Middle Ages iron horseshoes were used to counteract the influence of witches.† The belief in witchcraft has caused untold suffering, but it was an acknowledgment of the supposed existence in women of some power not possessed by men. And it is not fitting that the civilised descendants of barbarism should pour scorn on primitive ideas, considering the record of Europe not three centuries ago.‡

The idea of magic connected with women is still held by some primitive peoples, for there are

> " certain indications which lead us to suspect that the African negro ascribes to woman some dim sort of sacred character, a mystic nature as it were."§

Whence arose this widespread belief in a mystery in woman? Many things would be unaccountable to the primitive mind, and there were inexplicable facts

* *Marriage, Totemism and Religion*, by Lord Avebury.

† See E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*.

‡ In 1649 the citizens of Newcastle petitioned their Common Council to bring to trial all persons suspected of witchcraft, and some thirty old women were tried by the ordeal of the pinprick. See the " Local Records " of Newcastle.

§ A. L. Cureau, *Savage Man in Central Africa*.

in connection with woman's physique that made her incomprehensible to man. Then her faculty of getting to the heart of a subject, an incident, a process, or an emotion without any steps of reasoning would appear magical to them. Her power of intuition enables her to seize upon essentials and truths in a way that seems mysterious to the ratiocinative methods of man. But magic is expressed in action as well as in understanding. Perhaps the knowledge of her sexual power over himself gave to man the belief that she could work other miracles. If the sight or the touch of her could produce so much effect on him, what else might she not be able to do? Of course such causes worked unconsciously to primitive minds, but these characteristics of her physique, her intuition, and her capacity to arouse passion in him different from that in her, were characteristics he did not possess; he could not comprehend them, and therefore the possessor of them was endowed with a mysterious magic.

The question about patriarchy and matriarchy in primitive times has been discussed by authorities who have carried on the controversy sometimes beyond the bounds of common sense, and with little sense of proportion in sociological values. It is impossible to have certainty on such matters, but the truth would appear to consist in something intermediate and more complicated than any one doctrine.* According to the habits of present-day savages and of animals it is extremely unlikely that promiscuity was prevalent, although both polygamy and polyandry have been

* The controversy with regard to the patriarchal family and community of wives is clearly and concisely put in a chapter on "The Early History of the Family," in Andrew Lang's *Custom and Myth*, where he sums up the theories of Bachofen, MacLennan, Morgan, and Maine.

customary.* But, as Darwin says,† "From all we know of the passions of all male quadrupeds, promiscuous intercourse in a state of nature is highly improbable." Westermarck also believes that marriage was customary among primitive peoples. This does not necessarily mean monogany, for marriage may be defined as "an exclusive relation of one or more men to one or more women, based on custom, recognised and supported by public opinion, and, where law exists, by law." ‡ There need be no *ceremony* for a marriage, and among the savages of to-day in many cases there are no marriage rites.§

Improbable also is Bachofen's theory that women put a stop to promiscuity under the impulse of strong religious aspiration and introduced marriage. Therefore they held the first place, and became heads of families, and ruled.‖ The process sounds too mechanical, and one asks the question: How did they do it?

A note may be made in passing of the originator of the gynæcocentric theory,¶ who affirmed that the female sex was primary and the male secondary, in the organic scheme, and that originally and normally all things centred round the female. He considers that "the male is primarily and normally an inconspicuous and insignificant afterthought of nature."** But he does not explain how woman is to be satisfied

* Polyandry was practised in Ceylon, Arabia Felix, India, and among the Ancient Britons. See Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*.

† In the *Descent of Man*, Part III.

‡ Lord Avebury, in *Marriage, Totemism and Religion*.

§ Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*.

‖ This view is expressed in *Das Mutterrecht*, a short account of which appears in *Primitive Marriage*, by J. G. MacLennan.

¶ The American sociologist, Lester F. Ward.

** See his *Pure Sociology*.

with " an inconspicuous and insignificant afterthought" as her mate.

A matriarchate probably preceded the patriarchal family, but matriarchate here means the tracing of descent through the mother, as she was obviously the parent, and at one stage the share that fathers had in procreation was not realised, nor, where polyandry was practised, could the father be identified.

> " The system of mother-kin, i.e. of tracing descent through females, instead of through males, is often called matriarchate. But this term is inappropriate and misleading, as it implies that under the system in question the women govern the men. Even when the so-called matriarchate regulates the descent of the kingdom this does not mean that the women of the royal family reign ; it only means that they are the channel through which the kingship is transmitted to their husbands or sons."*

Herodotus mentions the system of matriarchy, but says nothing of women ruling. He remarks† that the Lycians

> " have this peculiar custom, wherein they resemble no other men, they derive their names from their mothers and not from their fathers, and through mothers reckon their kin."

Status was also derived through their mothers. The inheritance of position, property or name through the mother raises the social importance of women, but the tendency was never carried so far as to subordinate men to women. " The theory of gynæcocracy is in truth a dream of visionaries and pedants."‡ There has been a wide prevalence of the system of mother-kin, and it has influenced religion as well as social life ; it has moulded religious ideas and customs. The creation of goddesses owes something to it, as

* J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Part II.
† In his *History*, I, 173.
‡ J. G. Frazer, in *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*.

also the nominal superiority, in some cases, of priestesses over priests. In Assam, where the mother-kin system is followed, goddesses predominate in the religion, and in one State, Khyrim, the high priestess of the head of the State is a woman. Among the Pelew islanders they say that the existence of the clan, as such, depends on the life of the women, for, if all the men die, the women could marry the men of other clans and the children would belong to the women's clan; but if all the women die the clan ceases to exist. The eldest women here have a decisive influence on affairs, the headman doing nothing without consulting them. The important position of the women among these people is also due to the fact that the Pelews subsist mostly on taro (a kind of sweet potato), and the cultivation of the fields is mainly the concern of the women; the cultivated soil is often regarded as the property of the women who till it. The conception of a great Mother Goddess, the divine source of all fertility, follows easily, and through such customs and influences arose the mighty figures of Astarte, Isis, Demeter and the Bona Dea.*

Under the metronymic (mother-name) system the woman had moulded the family into a social group, and when the man remained with her the way was clear for patriarchy.

> "The patriarchal theory represents society as the enlargement of the family, and the family as a group composed at first of a man and his wife and children. When children and their children and more distant descendants married groups were formed."†

The father here was the chief or patriarch, and his

* See J. G. Frazer's *Adonis, Attis, Osiris.*
† J. F. MacLennan, *The Patriarchy Theory.*

authority was practically unlimited. The mother was subordinate, but she obtained a certain protection and status as his wife and the mother of his childern. The possession by one man of a particular woman is supposed to have arisen through his having captured* her from another tribe, when he would keep her to himself against other claimants. Marriage from an outside tribe, or exogamy, became the custom, for then the woman was his own. In whatever way this arose, it was a step in the long road of experiments and mistakes towards the ideal of monogamy. A pretence at capture survives in many marriage ceremonies,† and the disinclination exhibited by the Esquimaux and Bushmen girls to marriage, an aversion which often has to be conquered by force, may also be a survival.

The rule came to be that men and women of the same tribe could not marry, and the whole complicated system of totemism arose.

> "Totems are a class of objects which a savage regards as standing to him or his in some peculiar and intimate relation, from which, in some mysterious manner, he derives his origin or which he regards with superstitious respect. . . . Totemism arose through naming individuals and families after particular animals."‡

The rules of totemism usually applied indifferently to men and women in the same tribe, but there are some instances of a sexual totemism, wherein each sex believes it is united by mystical bonds to a different animal. Among the Kunai in Australia the men are brothers of the emu-wren, and the women the sisters of the linnet; in other tribes it is the bat and the

* For instances of marriage by capture, see Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, Chapter XXI.

† For instances see J. F. MacLennan's *Primitive Marriage*.

‡ Lord Avebury, in *Marriage, Totemism and Religion*.

woodpecker. Each sex regards the animal to which it is related as a sort of protector which must be treated with the greatest regard, and it is forbidden to kill and eat it.* These beliefs show that the savages have recognised a difference of function in the sexes, though, in the main, both were treated alike by the rules of primitive religious beliefs.

So close an association of husband and wife was made that in the customs of sympathetic magic they were regarded almost as one flesh. The following is selected from a crowd of instances all over the world.†

At Banting, in Sarawak, the Dyak natives were fighting for the British against rebels, and these rules had to be kept by the wives :

> " The wives must wake very early in the morning and open the windows as soon as it is light, otherwise their absent husbands will oversleep themselves. The women may not oil their hair, or the men will slip. The women may neither sleep nor doze by day, or the men will be drowsy on the march. The women must cook and scatter popcorns on the verandah every morning; so will the men be agile in their movements. The rooms must be kept very tidy, all boxes being placed near the walls ; for if anyone were to stumble over them the absent husbands would fall and be at the mercy of the foe. At every meal a little rice must be left in the pot and put aside ; so will the men far away have something to eat and need never go hungry. On no account may the women sit at the loom till their legs go cramped, otherwise their husbands will likewise be stiff in their joints and unable to rise up quickly and run away from the foe. . . . Further, they may not cover up their faces, or the men would not be able to find their way through the tall grass or jungle. Again, the women may not sew with a needle, or the men will tread on the sharp spikes set by the enemy in the path. Should a wife be unfaithful while her husband is away he will lose his life in the enemy's country."

Nor is this closeness of association without affection, for

* See *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, by E. Durkheim.
† These are given in J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Part I.

"When we confine ourselves to the examination of strictly totemic marriage we find, even in the wildest tribes, that it was generally founded in mutual liking, that it was contracted under the sanction of the recognised family laws, and that its ritual was that of a religious ceremony. The poor Bushmen even believe that the laws relating to marriage are of divine origin."*

And the Veddahs, wild tribes living in the interior of Ceylon, and belonging to the ancient Dravidian race that formerly inhabited India, are so backward in civilisation that they have no pottery, their cooking is most primitive, they wear scarcely any clothing and are very dirty, yet

"They have, however, one remarkable peculiarity which it would be unfair to omit. They are kind, affectionate, and constant to their wives, abhor polygamy, and have a proverb that 'Death alone can separate husband and wife.'"†

Sometimes the supreme sacrifice was made by wives at their husband's death. In the Fiji Islands the chief's wives were sent to the next life with him at his death, and often they went willingly to be in heaven with him and to serve him.

Through long ages and unconscious of the meaning and tendency of their actions and customs, our primitive ancestors moulded the spheres of the men and women of the future, and certain aspects of their lives foreshadow what was to come. There was no time, or ability, or desire to theorise on the differences between the sexes, and to each came the tasks that nature provided. Nature settled much; not only external nature in the way of hard ground, scarcity of food, cold, wild animals and tempests, all of which required energy and courage to combat; but also the primal needs and instincts and promptings of man's

* D. G. Brinton, *The Religions of Primitive Peoples*.
† Lord Avebury, in *Prehistoric Times*.

nature and woman's nature. Life was hard, and each did his or her share with struggle and in bewilderment. Self-preservation and food were their main concern, and terror abided with them. In the days when force was paramount in nature, in animals, and in man, the physically weaker suffered the most; but there was no deliberate enslavement of woman by man. Brutality was present, but they were brutal to all—to men, women, children, animals. Individual cases of cruelty of a man to a woman, of course, occurred, just as it occurs that individual husbands are henpecked, but this cannot be regarded as sex brutality or sex cruelty; it was rather undeveloped human nature that knew not sensitiveness or control. And even in the days of force there were other means of restraining men, as the Papuans of Port Moresby can show. Here it is a rare occurrence for a man to beat his wife, for when he does the other women make a song about it which they sing whenever he appears, and no one is so susceptible to ridicule as the New Guinea savage and other savages.* In West Africa if a man repudiates his wife the women of the village attack him *en masse*; so co-operation and public opinion had their power.

Control in the sex sphere was difficult and unattained for centuries, and it may be that some sex "brutality" may be explained by those elements of the sexual impulse "which lead to domination on the part of the man, and to submission on the part of the woman,"† and which, if uncontrolled, can lead to much which would make the wife's subjection to her husband very real. As Havelock Ellis says ‡

* E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas.*
† *Ibid.*
‡ In *Studies in the Psychology of Sex.*

> " While in man it is possible to trace a tendency to inflict pain or the simulacrum of pain on the women they love, it is still easier to trace in women a delight in experiencing physical pain when inflicted by a lover, and an eagerness to accept subjection to his will."

To follow his impulse was not cruelty on the part of the man, as superficial observers might think, especially when there was the corresponding yielding on the part of the woman. But it needed the restraint which the ages have taught, and the lesson has been a great one, for

> " This passion which is one of the mightiest forces acting on man in the height of his moral strength and the plenitude of his intellectual vigour, was also one of the most uncontrollable of his instincts when he had most of the animal in him."*

There is also the influence of one another's natures on each other: the woman would tend to become what the man desired; the man would cultivate the qualities admired by the woman. Though her actions might be forced and her scope might be limited, her nature would react to his desires just as his would to her requirements. The process of the formation of qualities would be in part willing, as well as unconscious and sometimes unwilling.

But we may conclude that, right from the beginning, long before any theories arose, woman's nature, based on her physique, moulded by experience and action, influenced by man's nature, and limited by external conditions, has determined her sphere. The facts gave rise to the theories. Woman has woven, and is weaving, her own destiny on the warp of her environment, and she will continue the pattern with ever nobler designs.

* Sir H. S. Maine, in his *Early Law and Custom.*

CHAPTER II

ANCIENT EGYPT

Religion the predominating factor influencing all life.—Various goddesses.—The great Isis—legends, characteristics, widespread power.—Respect paid to woman as a class.—Brother and sister marriage—its explanations.—Queens—their importance and power.—Accounts of various royal ladies, especially Hatshepsut (Hatasu) and her works.—Ordinary women—their occupations and position.—Honour given to mothers—marriage a civil contract.—Inscriptions of husbands to wives.—Old Egyptian tales and poems.—Ptolemaic Egypt and its women.—Yet in spite of high position then womanhood has received no set-back in the present day.

WITH the ancient Egyptians religion was a predominating factor in life, and most civic and public interests were guided by its decrees. A national devotedness caused gods and goddesses to govern the doings of all and to direct the policy of the rulers.* Each month was presided over by a deity, and with their inherent conservatism the people abided by dictates once issued and traditions once established. Influences in connection with religion are reciprocal; for out of many minds and hearts a religion develops, and in turn it affects the thoughts and feelings of those that follow it. Thus the mighty goddesses of ancient Egypt not only partially formed the characteristics of their woman

* The best general view of the subject is *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, by A. Wiedemann. A good popular account is given by W. M. Flinders Petrie, in *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*.

worshippers, but were actually formed from the qualities, idealised and ascribed to superhuman beings, of the women themselves.

In the Egyptian legend of Creation the god is assisted by the goddess Maat, usually regarded as the deity of truth as well as law and order. She was present at the weighing of the heart in the Judgment Hall of the Underworld,* and she estimated its worth. All judges of high rank served her, and it was esteemed an honour to be one of her priests; gods and kings of all periods said they lived by her. When Akhenaton wrought his great reformation in religion hers was the only idea he preserved from the old religion. Representations of her link her with the foremost gods, such as Ptah the Creator and Ra the Sun-god, and she always holds the *ankh*,† the emblem of life, in her hand.‡

Another abstract goddess was Safekht, who presided over learning and writing, and gave to rulers their fame. On the walls of a temple§ she stands depicted with two gods inscribing the king's name on the sacred tree, and this act endowed him with eternal life.‖

As the god Min symbolised the male principle in life, so did Hathor the female principle. She is often identified with other goddesses, and sometimes they are all considered as forms or attributes of Hathor, so that the priests of her magnificent temple at Denderah¶

* See *The Book of the Dead.*

† Or *crux ansata*, which represents the masculine and feminine principles.

‡ Wiedemann compares her with the Greek Themis—the great goddess behind all phenomena.

§ That of Rameses II at Gurnah.

‖ The illustration can be seen in Wiedemann's *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians.*

¶ The temple is comparatively uninjured at the present day.

affirmed that all prayers were in reality addressed to her. But primarily she was the goddess of love and joy, and many festivals were dedicated to her. These three goddesses represent feminine qualities rather than persons, but Egypt also evolved human goddesses who were more widely known and worshipped. Of these Mût, the great mother, wife of Amen-Ra, is an early instance; she is often represented as protecting or leading kings, and nearly every museum in the world now possseses one of her statues. Neit is another early goddess, named in some of the oldest inscriptions and supposed to be of Libyan origin. Sais, where her worship was predominant, was known as the abode of the mother of gods, and a veiled statue of her there bears the mystic inscription:

> "I am everything which has been, which is, and which will be, and no mortal has yet lifted my curtain."

"One night early in the year all Egypt blazed with lamps lighted in her honour, and this festival . . . was perpetuated in the Christian Candlemas."* She is frequently mentioned by the Greeks† and is usually represented as a dweller in the Underworld. Her special care was for weaving and hunting—two of the chief occupations of a nomadic people.

But all others are overshadowed by the great Isis, whose influence, not only on Egypt but also throughout the Roman Empire and in the development of early Christian tradition,‡ has been most marked. She had many centres of worship, the chief being at Abydos and Mendos, and in later times Philæ was renowned for her cult on account of the magnificent temples raised to her; inscriptions prove that she was

* F. J. Gould, *A Concise History of Religion*, Vol. I.
† The inscription quoted above may be the work of a Greek.
‡ See the chapters on Rome and Early Christianity.

worshipped here as late as the fifth century A.D. In most of the legends* she appears as a healer or protector and a loving wife and mother. Her husband Osiris gave civilisation to the Egyptians and then traversed the world to spread civilising ideas and customs.† During his absence Isis is left in sole charge of the kingdom and she rules wisely and warily, resisting the worker of evil, Typhon (or Set), the lifelong enemy of Osiris. On his return her husband is entrapped and killed by Typhon, and the rest of the legend tells of the lamentation and wanderings of Isis, her successful search and renewed loss, her final recovery of all the pieces of the body, the birth of her son Horus, and his vengeance on Typhon. The wanderings of Isis form a favourite theme of Egyptian legend.

> "Isis was the great and beneficent goddess and mother, whose influence and love pervaded all heaven and earth and the abode of the dead, and she was the personification of the great feminine creative power which conceived and brought forth every living creature and thing, from the gods in heaven to man on the earth and to the insect on the ground; what she brought forth she protected and cared for, and fed, and nourished, and she employed her life in using her power graciously and successfully, not only in creating new beings but in restoring those that were dead.‡ She was, besides these things, the highest type of a faithful and loving wife and mother, and it was in this capacity that the Egyptians worshipped her most."§

Osiris is supposed to have been the national god at the beginning of prehistoric culture, but, as has been pointed out,‖ Isis stood on a different plane, her

* They may be read in *Legends of the Gods*, by E. A. Wallis Budge.

† Compare the legend of Dionysus.

‡ Isis causes Osiris to be restored to life by her lamentations and love, and he henceforth rules in the underworld.

§ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*.

‖ By J. G. Frazer, in *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, where he shows that each of these gods was associated with a goddess more powerful and more important than himself.

priesthood and worship was more widespread, and she was the more important deity. In her is seen " the true wife, tender mother, beneficent queen of nature, encircled with the nimbus of moral purity, of immemorial and mysterious sanctity."

Besides being worshipped as the ideal wife and mother, Isis was regarded as the discoverer of wheat and barley growing wild—a belief that may represent the fact of women being the first agriculturists—and at her festivals stalks of barley and wheat were carried in the processions to commemorate the boon she had conferred on humanity. In time she absorbed all beneficent characteristics and became the guardian of the world*—the great Mother-goddess eternally caring for all living things.

> " She was the creatress of crops, she produced fruit, vegetables, plants of all kinds and trees, she made cattle prolific, she brought men and women together and gave them offspring, she was the authoress of all love, virtue, goodness and happiness. She made the light to shine, she was the spirit of the Dog-star which heralded the Nile-flood, she was the source of the power in the beneficent light of the moon ; and finally she took the dead in her bosom and gave them peace, and introduced them to a life of immortality and happiness similar to that which she had bestowed upon Osiris."†

With reverence paid to such a goddess a low position could not be given to woman, and the history and evidences of Egypt bear out this conclusion. Of all the nations of antiquity Egypt paid most respect to its womanhood, and observers assigned the cause to the example of Isis and her pre-eminence. Diodorus Siculus‡ says :

* A picture represents Ptolemy prostrate before her, and she says, " I give thee all countries." See Gardner Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians.*

† E. A. Wallis Budge, Introduction to *The Legends of the Gods.*

‡ A Greek historian of the time of Julius Cæsar and Augustus.

"For these reasons it was appointed that the queen should enjoy greater power and honour than the king, and that among private people the wife should rule over her husband, in the marriage contract the husband agreeing to obey his wife in all things."

The probability is that Isis was unconsciously made so powerful because women had a high status, and in her turn she reacted by upholding their position. She was a reflection as much as an example. If women had more power they also had more responsibility; for instance, the obligation of maintaining parents in old age rested on the daughters, not on the sons. Herodotus says,* "the men are under no obligation to support their parents if unwilling to do so, but the women are." This does not necessarily imply that the majority of men were unwilling.

Maternity counted for more than paternity, and descent was traced and property handed down through women rather than men. Mother-right † lasted in Egypt down to Roman times, and it was traditionally based on the example of Isis, who reigned and conferred benefits on her people. The custom of brother and sister marriages, which were regarded as the best marriages, was also said to be derived from the example of Isis, who married her brother Osiris. But the true explanation of this custom is probably to be found partly in the desire to keep the succession or property in the family.‡ Since the daughter was heiress, her brother married her in order to keep the inheritance. Thus the same result was obtained as where inheritance

* In Book II.

† With which must not be confused mother-*rule*. Ancient matriarchates usually meant no more than the tracing of descent and inheritance through the mother.

‡ See J. G. Frazer's remarks on the subject in *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*.

passes to the sons, for the man's greater partiality for fighting and ruling made him prominent in conquest and affairs of state. Another reason is indicated by Maspero :

> " The nobility of each member of a Pharaonic house and his claim upon the throne corresponded with the amount of divine blood (of Amon-Ra) which he could show ; he that derived it both from father and mother had a higher claim than he who had it from one parent only. Hence the Egyptian social laws permitted what would be impossible in any modern civilisation. The marriage of brother and sister was the marriage *par excellence*, and it contracted an unspeakable sanctity when this brother and sister were born of parents who stood in the same relation."

In many cases the brother and sister marriages were merely nominal, but in most cases the marriage was consummated and children were born ; these were considered more nearly the heirs than if the sister had married a stranger. Even as late as Ptolemaic and Roman times the custom was carried on, and the famous Cleopatra married her brother, though in her case it was probably only a matter of form.

Perhaps in no other nation of antiquity or modern times has so much reverence been paid to royalty, and especially to feminine royalty, as in Egypt.

More than six thousand years ago did Egyptian queens begin their sway ; and though the earliest name of a regent—Neith-Hetep (the supposed mother of Mena, first historic king of Upper and Lower Egypt) —may be legendary, the significance remains in that so much power was ascribed to a woman. " She whose orders are always obeyed " was Ne-Maat-Hap of the second dynasty, the first princess known to have been concerned in government, probably as regent, during which time she was supreme in command.* To the

* See *A Short History of Ancient Egypt*, by P. E. Newberry and J. Garstang.

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sixth dynasty* belongs the first woman who ruled as an independent sovereign; Manetho† places her as last of the dynasty, and she is reputed to have built the third pyramid. Another queen of this early period is entitled "The Hereditary Princess, the greatly praised, the Great Favourite, the beloved consort of the King, the Ruler of all women, the King's daughter of his body, Nefert." During the Hyksos invasion‡ the names of a few women appear as queens, one of whom is of particular note—Aah-Hetep I, a high priestess of the god Amen, and designated "Divine wife of Amen; Royal Mother; Great Royal Wife joined to the Beautiful White Crown." Aah-Hetep was born when her royal house was at war with the foreign Hyksos kings, and was endeavouring to re-establish the Pharaohs. Her husband was killed while fighting for his country's freedom, and she assumed full sovereign rights. Her son Aahmes conquered the foe and thus enabled his mother to regain her inheritance. Three of her sons reigned in turn, she lived through the reign of her grandson, and was still alive in that of her great-grandson.

Her daughter, Nefertari, married her own brother, and on his death she continued to rule until the end of her life, when she was worshipped for six centuries with a special priesthood and prayers. Her reign was the most brilliant of the queens' with one exception, and her granddaughter Aahmes was the mother of Egypt's most famous queen, Hatshepsut (or Hatshopsitu), often known as Hatasu.§ In her portraits

* Before 3000 B.C.

† An Egyptian historian and high priest of Heliopolis living in the third century B.C. He wrote a history of Egypt in Greek, of which fragments are still extant.

‡ About 2000 B.C. and the following centuries.

§ She reigned about 1500 B.C.

Hatshepsut shows an air of energy and resolution; she holds her head erect and has a firmly set mouth and bold aquiline nose.* When appearing in public as ruler of the land she dressed as a man and wore a false beard, while the inscriptions refer to her as "*son* of the sun," "*lord* of two lands," in addition to feminine titles. Like Queen Elizabeth of England, whom she resembles in more than one respect, she was clever and enterprising, but unscrupulous. Her influence was paramount in every department of government; she completely overshadowed her brother, whom she married, and her nephew, for whom she was regent. Buildings were constructed by her, schemes made for foreign commerce, a fleet of ships raised to trade at the mouth of the Red Sea, and her country was kept at peace during her rule.† Her chief undertaking was the famous expedition to Punt‡ to obtain incense, spices and other treasures. She had restored and enlarged the temple at Karnak, where she set up two of the finest obelisks in Egypt, and before the expedition started she asked the advice of the god Amen-Ra regarding it:

> "When the sovereign had poured out her supplications before the master of Karnak, a command was heard in the holy place, a counsel of the god himself, to explore the ways that lead to Pounanit, and to traverse the roads that lead to the Ports of incense, and on their return to bring the product of the Divine Land to the god who had modelled the beauties of the queen."

The great expedition brought back gold, ivory, precious woods, myrrh trees for transplantation,

* A good description of her appears in *Ancient Egypt*, by G. Rawlinson and A. Gilman.

† See the remarks on her achievements in *The Ancient History of the Near East*, by H. R. Hall.

‡ Supposed to be Somaliland.

§ Quoted in *New Light on Ancient Egypt*, by G. Maspero.

frankincense and other marvels, " the like of which was not brought for other kings," and which she presented to the great god Amen-Ra. In the magnificent temple created by Hatshepsut at Der-el-Bahri, dedicated to the god Amen and the goddess Hathor, the story of this expedition, as well as other acts of hers, are depicted on the walls. This mausoleum serves to commemorate her reign and is worthy of it.

> " In its design it was remarkable and unprecedented . . . it had to be reared up against the face of a great cliff . . . two terraces were built, one behind, the other to lead up to the rock-cut sanctuary. The boldness of the conception, the splendour of the architecture, and the beauty of its sculptured and painted decoration were the worthy first-fruits of the new imperial grandeur of Egypt. . . ."*

No other queen was so paramount a force in Egypt as Hatshepsut, but some others made their names and opinions of note. Included among these, and one of the most influential, is Thiy (or Tii or Taia), a queen of foreign origin, beautiful, with great ability, and the beloved wife of Amenhotep III.† She received more honours and is more fully represented on monuments thán any other great queen, and she is associated with her husband in all ceremonial records. This is the more significant as she was raised to be queen from the ranks of the people—a unique case—and her influence increased as years passed. Foreign potentates consulted with or appealed to her directly in matters of international policy, and she took an important part in Egyptian affairs ; ‡ this was especially while she was regent for her son

* H. R. Hall, in *The Ancient History of the Near East.*
† He reigned at the beginning of the fourteenth century B.C.
‡ See *The Queens of Egypt,* by Janet R. Buttles.

Akhenaton. During her husband's lifetime she introduced her religion of the worship of Aton (the power behind the Sun) into Egypt,* and this, modified and idealised, was carried on by her son, the "heretic" king, who caused so profound a revolution in religion and art during his reign.†

Akhenaton's wife is also always associated with him in public acts—she drives a chariot, distributes rewards, and officiates in a temple, as shown in bas-reliefs that have been discovered. At vespers to Aton she took her part, and in a tomb she is mentioned as "She who sends the Aton to rest with a sweet voice, and with her two beautiful hands bearing two sistrums."‡ Every wish she expressed was executed by her husband, and one of his forms of oath was, "As my heart is happy in the Queen and her children." He spoke of her as "Mistress of his happiness . . . at hearing whose voice the king rejoices," as "Lady of grace," "great of love" and "fair of face," and he prays

> "Sweet love fills my heart for the queen and her young children. Grant a great age to the Queen Nefertiti, in long years may she keep the hand of Pharaoh. . . ."§

During the period of the Ramesides a high priest married the heiress to the throne,‖ and thereby the office of chief attendant on the god Amen—who had

* *A Short History of Ancient Egypt*, by P. E. Newberry and J. Garstang.

† He reigned 1383–1365 B.C. For a full account of this remarkable king's work see *The Life and Times of Akhenaton*, by A. E. P. Weigall.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Tutankhamen, the discovery of whose tomb by Mr. Howard Carter, in November, 1922, has created so much interest, married a daughter of Akhenaton, and thus became king of Egypt, succeeding his father-in-law.

‖ About 1000 B.C.

been restored after the death of Akhenaton—became vacant. Thus the importance of the priestesses greatly increased, and they became the sole visible intermediaries between the god and the people. As sole representative of the divinity, the High Priestess acquired such far-reaching power that she was later able to transmit her legitimate royal claims by an official marriage or to bequeath them to an adopted daughter.* The Great Queens of Thebes, whose children inherited the throne, appear in the XXIV dynasty; and they were the brides sought by each new king in order to legitimise his line. Astemkheb I is designated

> "Daughter of the chief Prophet of Amen; Chief of the Chantresses of Min, of Horus, and of Isis in Apon; Lady of Both Lands; Chief Spouse of Amen."

Of the queens of the Ethiopian Dynasty,† Amenertas is the most important and most vigorous. She was both the political and spiritual chief, and administered the kingdom in peace and prosperity. Her crown was shared by her two brothers, but whenever any representation of them appears, hers is the predominant figure. All the functions pertaining to her sacerdotal office she as high priestess performed unaided, but military duties were left to a prince or minister.

Of course a certain amount of convention is observed in the epithets bestowed upon sovereigns, but the following indicates a practical good accomplished by this queen:

> "I was the wife of the divine one, benefactress to her city, a bounteous giver of her land, I gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked. . . ."

* See *The Queens of Egypt*, by Janet R. Buttles.

† *Circa* 748 to 664 B.C.

The last queen to be noticed lived when Egypt was coming under the sway of Persia.* Ankhesnefer-ab-Ra died before the conquest of Cambyses, but left no successor, and " with her closes the most extraordinary history of the legal status of a country's womankind that the world has ever known."†

But the queens were only individuals among thousands of other women, though their position indicates a certain relativity of position for women of inferior rank. Far more information is obtainable concerning royalty than concerning any other rank in life, for most of the remains of Egypt refer to royal persons. There are, however, a few records which have left some " footprints on the sands of time " by which we may read, to a certain extent, the manner of life the women lived.‡ Secluded they never were, and more freedom was theirs than was possessed by any women of olden times. Greek travellers were often surprised at seeing Egyptian women going about without restraint to work at their trade or manual labour, while some of the men worked at home Representations of cooking operations often depict men making cakes, kneading dough, cooking lentils, etc., and probably Sophocles had such men in mind when he wrote :

> " O true image of the ways of Egypt that they show in their spirit and their life ! For there the men sit weaving in the house, but the wives go forth to win the daily bread."§

Women took an important share in industrial and

* Sixth century B.C.

† Janet R. Buttles.

‡ The chief sources of information with regard to life in ancient Egypt are : (*a*) Monuments, temples, and tombs with their inscriptions, papyrus rolls from libraries and archives, objects buried with the dead. (*b*) Hebrew books with their accounts of Moses and Joseph. (*c*) Accounts of Greek travellers.

§ In *Œdipus at Colonus*.

commercial life ; free contracts were made by them as by men. Pictures exist* of women weaving, using spindles, cooking, playing the guitar and other musical instruments, and even shooting at targets. They accompanied their husbands in their doings, and took part in feasts, public festivals† and funeral processions. Little restraint was placed on social intercourse between the sexes, and women were represented as mixing freely with men on almost every occasion. There was practically no occupation closed to them except that of fighting, and practically no restrictions placed to their actions.

> "The Egyptian woman enjoyed far greater personal independence than was usually accorded to the women of the East. She had a large share not only in the government of the family, but also in the religious ceremonies and even in the affairs of the exterior world. The records of the monuments show her to have been as actively concerned in the affairs of her day, war alone excepted, as her father, her husband, or her son."‡

Most women, however, as has always occurred, became wives and mothers, and spent their energies in making homes for their loved ones, in return for which they received their full meed of affection.

> "The married woman, the mother of children, enjoyed the greatest freedom. She ruled her house and family with benevolent but despotic power, and her influence extended far beyond the walls of her dwelling. She went about freely in the towns and villages, conversed with men as well as women, and, unlike the modern Egyptian woman, she wore no veil."§

The mother was particularly esteemed, and she,

* See *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, by J. Gardner Wilkinson, for reproductions.

† Herodotus describes the festival at Bubastis in which women took a prominent part. Book II.

‡ G. Maspero, in the Introduction to *The Queens of Egypt*.

§ *History of the Egyptian People*, E. A. Wallis Budge.

rather than the father, is represented on tombs.* As we have already seen, descent was traced through her, and inheritance passed to the son of a sister or of the eldest daughter. Probably this fact of mother-right was among the forces tending to the better condition of women in Egypt. An old papyrus† says

> "Thou shalt never forget thy mother and what she has done for thee, that she bore thee and nurtured thee in all thy ways. . . . For she carried thee long beneath her heart as a heavy burden, and after thy months were accomplished she bore thee. Three long years she carried thee upon her shoulders and gave thee her breast to thy mouth. She nurtured thee nor knew offence at thy uncleanness. And when thou didst enter school and wast instructed in the writings, daily she stood by the master with bread and beer from the house."

And Ptah-hotep,‡ who has been called "the first of all the race of platitudinarians,"§ says:

> "I gave thee thy mother, who bore thee with much suffering. She placed thee in the Chamber of Instruction for the sake of thy learning in books. She was constant to thee. . . ."‖

He also expounds his ideas on the value of wives:

> "If thou wouldst be wise, provide for thy house and love thy wife that is in thy arms. . . . Gladden her heart during her life-time, for she is an estate profitable to her lord. Be not harsh, for gentleness will master her more than thy strength. Give to her that for which she sigheth and that towards which her eye looketh, so shalt thou keep her in thy house."

Although polygamy was not unlawful, no sculptures

* Adolf Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt.*

† Known as the Boulak papyrus and quoted in *Morals in Evolution*, by L. T. Hobhouse.

‡ Lived *circ.* 4300 B.C.

§ By L. T. Hobhouse.

‖ Quoted in *Egypt and the Egyptians*, by J. O. Bevan.

represent a man with more than one wife. Herodotus says, "Like the Greeks they confine themselves to one wife."* Some rich men possessed harems, but the legal wife's position was secure from encroachment, and by a marriage contract the wife could make it not lawful for the husband "to keep a concubine or lover or to beget children by another woman, or to live in a house where the wife was not mistress."† She in her turn promises that she will not go away without his permission and will obey him "as a wife should." Marriage was a civil contract which either party could cancel, and where there was no property a marriage was valid if the two agreed to become husband and wife.‡ Where the woman had property she was regarded as mistress of the house and her husband was a privileged and permanent boarder, but it would be foolish to conclude that this meant a rule of women. Where the man's exertions upheld the house, affairs would naturally settle themselves so that the man took the lead outside the house and the woman within it. The relationship appears to have been, according to many inscriptions, faithful and affectionate. A widower who falls ill is told by a magician-priest that the spirit of his wife is the cause, and the man inscribes a letter on the tomb to the "wise spirit" of his wife:

> "From the time I became thy husband until now have I ever done anything which I had to hide from thee? . . . Thou didst become my wife when I was young, and I was with thee. I was appointed to all honour of offices, and I was with thee; I did not forsake thee nor cause thy heart any sorrow. . . . Behold when I commanded the foot

* Book II.
† Donaldson, *Woman: Her Position in Ancient Greece and Rome.*
‡ Compare the Scotch agreement.

soldiery of Pharoh together with his chariot force, I did cause thee to come that they might fall down before thee, and they brought all manner of good things to present to thee. . . . When thou wast ill with the sickness which afflicted thee, I went to the chief physician and he made thee thy medicine, he did everything that thou didst say he should do. When I had to accompany Pharoh on his journey to the South, my thoughts were with thee, and I spent those eight months without caring to eat or drink. When I returned to Memphis I besought Pharoh and betook myself to thee; and I greatly mourned for thee with my people before my house."*

At a later period† a wife, in an inscription on a stela, pathetically wishes her husband to be happy after her death:

"O my brother, my husband, cease not to drink and to eat, to be drunken, to enjoy the love of women, to make holiday. Follow thy desire by night and by day; grant care no place in thine heart. . . ."

One group shows M'ayptah, a priest, with his wife, who is called "the lady full of charms, of grace, and of love"; another shows the wife with her arm round her husband's neck,‡ and yet another shows her seated on his knee.§

Some old Egyptian tales on papyri represent women as courageous in some cases, learned in others, and deceitful sometimes. In the story of the Doomed Prince‖ the passionate love of a chief's daughter inspires her to save the prince's life twice, and to guard him from many dangers; "Setna and the Magic Book" is a tale introducing a woman who is able to read—an uncommon feat; and in "Anpu and Bata" Anpu slays his wife when he finds she has

* Quoted in *Life in Ancient Egypt*, by Adolf Erman.
† About the first century B.C.
‡ May be seen on the walls of the tomb of Nakhonite.
§ See *Life in Ancient Egypt*.
‖ See *Egyptian Tales*, edited by W. M. Flinders Petrie.

deceived him by acting similarly to Potiphar's wife. The story tells of no consequences to Anpu on account of his action, so probably he would be considered justified.

A few love poems exist indicating a certain delicacy in lovers' feelings. A poet sings*

> "When I see my sister coming my heart beats fast, my arms open to enfold her; my heart rejoices with everlasting joy when my lady arrives. If she embraces me, and her arms open for me, it is as if I was anointed with the perfumes of Arabia, with the sweetest odours. If she kisses me with her half-opened lips I am intoxicated."

And another poem expresses a girl's feeling for her lover: †

> "The place is beautiful where we walk, because we walk together, thy hand resting within mine, our mind thoughtful and our heart joyful. It is intoxicating to me to hear thy voice, yet my life depends upon hearing it. Whenever I see thee it is better than food and drink."

Priestesses have been mentioned several times, and throughout the history of Egypt their influence was great, and it increased as time passed. Inscriptions speak of "singers of the high-priestess," and of "the high-priestess of Amen-Ra."‡ Herodotus does not designate them priestesses, but he came into contact with "an order of women chosen from the principal families employed in the service of the gods." In the golden age of Egypt,§ when the Theban queens ruled, the cult of each deity had its own sisterhood of priestesses, deriving incomes from the estates of the temples which they served,‖ and including queens,

* Quoted in Maspero's *New Light on Ancient Egypt*.
† Quoted in *The Treasury of Ancient Egypt*, by A. C. P. B. Weigall.
‡ See *Life in Ancient Egypt*, by A. Erman.
§ *Circa* 1580–1320 B.C.
‖ See *The Queens of Egypt*.

princesses, and daughters of nobles and priests. But not only did high-class women serve their religion; for by Ptolemaic times "we scarcely meet with one lady under the New Empire, whether she were married or single, the wife of an ecclesiastic or a layman, whether she belonged to the family of a high priest or to that of an artisan, who was not thus connected with a temple."* Thus every woman in Egypt, whatever her station, had the opportunity of worship and service, if she possessed the desire.

Recently discovered papyri of the Ptolemaic period show no lowering of woman's legal or social status, and Egyptian women figure frequently, concluding bargains, stating accounts, making petitions, lending money and selling land.† Changes of government left social customs and Egyptian law practically unchanged.

The Ptolemaic queens appear to have wielded the power bequeathed them by their predecessors. Arsinoe Philadelphos,‡ second wife of her brother Ptolemy II, has more memorials in the Greek world than any other queen. Several towns are named after her; statues of her were erected at Athens and Olympia; and after her death she was declared the guardian goddess of the district round Lake Mœris. In the decree of Canopus§ long directions can be read for paying divine honours to the king's wife and daughter (both named Berenike) as well as to himself. Cleopatra I‖ was regent for her young son, and by her exertions recovered some of Egypt's lost provinces.

* Adolf Erman.

† See a paper by Miss R. E. White on "Women in Ptolemaic Egypt," printed in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. XVIII.

‡ Third century B.C.

§ The stele of Canopus was discovered at Tauris in 1866, and preserved in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo. It was composed in the ninth year of the reign of Ptolemy III, third century B.C.

‖ Second century B.C.

The famous Cleopatra* of Plutarch and Shakespeare was only the last of a long series of brilliant rulers whose power extended far beyond their land of Egypt. The influence of the last-named was not evil in all respects, and a great redeeming point in her character is

> " her constant love and care of Cæsarion, her eldest and Cæsar's son, whom she associated with her in sovereignty, whose figure she engraved on the national monuments, whose life and interests she strove to safeguard in every extremity."†

Much has been said of the high and respected status of woman in the days of ancient Egypt, but the caution must be made that this position is but relative, and that by no means since those early days has there been a setback in the place attained by woman. As evolution has advanced womanhood has emerged instead of retreating, for womanhood includes *all women* of whatever caste or occupation. Women—and men—of the poorest classes had but little status or consideration in ancient times, and dared not demand it. Therefore a general view, surveying broad issues, sees advance, slow and perhaps not straightforward, but sure, for womanhood in general as well as for manhood in general.

* Born 69 B.C.

† J. P. Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*. After Cleopatra's own death, Cæsarion was killed by order of Augustus. An exhaustive account of her is given in A. Weigall's *The Life and Times of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt*.

CHAPTER III

BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA

Knowledge limited, obtained mostly from inscriptions, legends, and code of Khammurabi.—Goddesses—their characteristics, names, etc. Most goddesses shadowy reflections of gods, but feminine as well as masculine principles always recognised.—Pre-eminence of Istar, temples, sacred prostitution, priestesses, prayers.—Honour paid to her by kings.—Code of Khammurabi—position of women under it.—Laws regarding marriage, divorce, wives, daughters, etc.—Commerce and women.—Conception of womanhood neither slighting nor insulting.

KNOWLEDGE of any kind concerning these two nations is limited,* but sufficient is available to obtain a certain idea as to the estimate in which women were held. This idea is given mainly by legends about goddesses, by inscriptions on tablets, etc., and by the Code of Khammurabi. With one exception Babylonia supplies the material, for the people of that district were the more literary and imaginative, while the Assyrians, who originally emigrated from Babylonia, adopted the religion and legends of their mother country and gave both a more warlike aspect.

Before Babylon became predominant the city-states of the district each possessed temples dedicated to a special deity. Two flourishing states were Erech (or Uruk) and Akkad (or Agade), both of which worshipped

* Some remarkable discoveries were made at Ur, in Mesopotamia, by the expedition under the joint auspices of the University of Pennsylvania and the British Museum in 1923.

a goddess as their particular deity,* as did the cities of Nineveh and Arbela in Assyria, whither the Babylonian religion was carried. When the Semitic peoples† invaded and settled in Babylonia they adopted the existing gods and goddesses, and by the time Babylon was in the ascendancy Merodach (or Marduk) was the principal god, while Istar (or Ishtar) had absorbed the worship paid to other goddesses. That feminine deities received homage at all in those early ages‡ is in itself a tribute to womanhood, and that fact alone would indicate that women were not nonentities. The Babylonians built the largest temples in the world and their religion§ played a great part in their lives with its liturgies, ceremonies, hymns and prayers, so that in their legends is reflected their habits and attitude to life, which include the status of women.

In the list of Babylonian deities about one-fourth are feminine ; Tiamat (or Tiawath) had brought forth all creation, even the primeval gods, but she was a monster of wickedness, and Merodach fought with and slew her. Tar-paniter was the consort of Merodach and one of the most important of Babylonian goddesses ; her name means the seed-creatress, and she was sometimes called " the lady of the abyss " and the " queen who produces birth." Nina was another goddess of creation ; she directed the mighty Gudea, a Sumerian king, in visions, and he built many temples, one to Nina, bringing the materials for it from Arabia and

* G. S. Goodspeed's *History of the Babylonians and Assyrians.*

† The original inhabitants were Sumerians, a non-Semitic race, probably akin to the Mongolian.

‡ The Babylonians were in a state of civilisation by about 4500 B.C.

§ The best survey is that of Morris Jastrow, in *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria.* See also *The Babylonian Epic of Creation,* by S. Langdon.

Syria.* Those who migrated across the Tigris and became the nucleus of the Assyrian race founded a town that became a great centre of her worship, and called it Nineveh in her honour.† Allatu was a prototype of Persephone, a formidable figure, much dreaded; she dwelt in Hades and was sometimes addressed as "the lady of the ghost world"; Marmit is similar to the Ate of the Greeks and the Fate of the Romans—"she was the maker of fate, who has established the destinies of mankind," and "she has established death and life, but the days of death are unknown." Ban, "the lady saving from death," was a goddess prominent before the time of Khammurabi —she gave life and healed the body in sickness; Sala, the wife of Rimmon, was known as "the merciful," and Nebuchadnezzar "built in Babylon the House Supreme, the temple of the lady of the mountain, for the exalted goddess."‡

At the head of the spirits of night was Lilat, one of the *lilithu* or night-demons; among the Hebrews she became Lilith, a beautiful creature who lay in wait for children.

An old calendar gives many days dedicated to different goddesses, and most of them are termed lucky days.§ On one day the king "makes his free-will offering to Samas, the mistress of the world"; another day is called "the white day of the great goddess Gula"; and there are others dedicated to "the mistress of the lower firmament," "the lady of the house of heaven," etc. The gods never ruled alone, but shared their honours with their wives, who, how-

* R. W. Rogers, *A History of Babylonia and Assyria.*

† T. G. Pinchen, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria.*

‡ A. H. Sayce, *The Ancient Babylonians* (The Hibbert Lectures for 1887).

§ Sayce gives the complete list for the month.

ever, were often little more than feminine counterparts of their husbands. At first sight these shadow goddesses may seem depreciatory of woman, but their existence posits the double principle of manhood and womanhood in deity. Such duality was not present in the Jewish god, nor in the early god of Christendom ; in the latter case the elevation of Mary restored " the right principle of civilisation." The sacred books of Chaldea contain many penitential psalms, showing a resemblance to the Hebrew ones, but in every case a goddess is addressed as well as a god.

> " May the heart of my god be appeased,
> May the heart of my goddess be appeased."*

Another invokes the " god and goddess of mankind," and in their cosmogony they say :

> " The heaven was made from the waters ;
> The god and the goddess create the earth."

A magical spell calls upon the names of goddesses alone :

> " May Nin-akha-Rudda, the mistress of spells, the spell of Eridu utter with pure mouth ; may Bahu, the great mother, the generatress of mankind, restore the blessing of health and the body ;
> " May Gula with quieting hand, the consecrated water . . . send into his body."

Ai, the wife of the sun-god Shamash, is addressed by a supplicant in the following prayer :

> " O lady, through bitterness of heart I cry to thee in sorrow : declare my forgiveness. O lady, say to thy servant : It is enough. Let thy heart be appeased. Bestow mercy on thy servant who is in affliction. Turn thy countenance towards him, accept his supplication. Turn in mercy towards thy servant with whom thou art angry. O lady, my hands are bound—I prostrate myself before thee. Intercede for me before the mighty hero, Shamash,

* One of these psalms is quoted in full in Sayce's *Ancient Babylonians*.

thy beloved spouse, that for a life of many days I may walk before thee."*

Not all the goddesses were mere reflections of their spouses; for instance, there was Dav-kina, who personified the earth and was an independent deity, whose powers were co-extensive with those of her husband, Ea, who personified the waters. She was also the mother of Tammuz, the bridegroom of Istar.

And above all others, independent of any god, was the great goddess Istar.† Her cult finally embraced those of lesser independent goddesses whose qualities became merged with hers, and, in times even anterior to the Semitic influence, she took precedence of the sun god.

"So far indeed from being the double or shadow of the god, Istar is rather the divinity who gives life and substance to her divine lovers. Tammuz himself was but the bridegroom of Istar; it was only for the sake of Istar that his name was held in honour."‡

Temples and shrines dedicated to Istar were numerous, those at Arbela, Nineveh, and Erech (which was the "city of the choirs of the festival girls and consecrated maidens of Istar") being the most famous, and the goddess was served by a large number of priestesses.

Prostitution became a religious duty and was recognised as such. Herodotus noticed it in his travels. He says that every woman born in the country must sit in the goddess's temple and consort with a stranger; the beautiful are soon free, but some remain three or four years.§ The practice may not have been as universal as Herodotus thought,|| but it

* From *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, by L. W. King.
† Called in Hebrew, Ashtoreth, and in Greek, Astarte.
‡ A. H. Sayce, *The Ancient Babylonians*.
§ Herodotus I, 199. Compare Baruch VI, 43.
|| J. G. Frazer thinks it was. See Chapter III of *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, for illuminating remarks on the subject.

was looked upon as self-immolation to the goddess, with a man as the instrument. The temple prostitutes

> " were invested with a sacred character, and their vocation, far from being deemed infamous, was probably long regarded by the laity as an exercise of more than common virtue, and rewarded with a tribute of mixed wonder, reverence, and pity, not unlike that which in some parts of the world is still paid to women who seek to honour their Creator in a different way by renouncing the natural functions of their sex and the tenderest relations of humanity. It is thus that the folly of mankind finds vent in opposite extremes alike harmful and deplorable."*

It cannot be doubted that the custom rendered a certain social service† in those days, and some idea of this penetrated the worshippers' mind, as they declared that those who would truly serve the goddess " had to share with her her pains and pleasures. One thus could live the divine life and be, as it were, united to the deity."‡ Of course some revolting features appeared, but the finer natures regarded Istar as the divine mother, the goddess who had begotten mankind and who cared for their welfare with a mother's love. It must also be borne in mind that three or four thousand years ago restraint in passion was unusual, and the degree of sensitiveness now attained in the realm of sex had not then evolved.

Another class of priestesses—honoured votaresses who resembled the Roman Vestals—also appeared; they held unusual rights and privileges and were vowed to celibacy. Though usually dwelling together

* J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris.*

† The psychology of the subject is difficult; though the possibility even in our age of what was then done and sanctioned by religion, was mooted in the correspondence columns of *The Freewoman* for 1912, when more than one woman said that *if* prostitution was necessary then the noblest women as well as others should take their turn. But of course the remedy for prostitution lies in other directions.

‡ Sayce, *The Ancient Babylonians.*

in convents yet they sometimes lived amongst their fellows, and were nominally married. In this case the husband had a concubine who bore him children but had no legal status as a wife; that position belonged to the votaress.*

The most well-known story of Istar† is that of her descent into the underworld to—

> ". . . the house whose entrance hath no exit,
> Upon the path whose way has no return,
> Upon the house whose enterers are deprived of light.
> Where dust is their nourishment, their food mud,
> Light they see not, in darkness they dwell. . . ."

She goes in search of the healing waters that will restore to life her bridegroom Tammuz;‡ and she becomes a type showing what a woman will endure for the sake of the man she loves. After she has passed through difficulties and persecutions the gods send to rescue her from Allatu, the queen of Hades, as her absence causes a cessation of love on earth. The legend is older than the Semitic settlement, as in an Accadian calendar the month of Tammuz is called " the month of the errand of Istar."

Some of the prayers breathed to this goddess evince the mighty powers ascribed to her; one suppliant cries

> " O mother of the gods who fulfils their commands, O lady of mankind, who makes the green herbs spring up, who created all things, who guides the whole of creation, O mother Istar whose side no god can approach, O exalted lady whose command is mighty, a prayer will I utter."

And Istar replies

* H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, Chapter V.

† See Sayce's *The Ancient Babylonians*, where the story is given in full.

‡ See Ezekiel viii. 14, where women are commemorating the death of Tammuz by mourning.

" To cause enlightenment, to prevail am I appointed, alone am I appointed,
By the side of my father the Moon god . . .
By the side of my brother the Sun god . . .
In the beginning was my glory, in the beginning was my glory,
In the beginning was I a goddess who marched on high.
Istar the divinity of the evening star am I
Istar the divinity of the dawn am I.

. . . . .

My glory extinguishes the earth, it spoils the earth.
That which glows in the clouds of heaven
Whose name is renowned in the world is my glory,
As queen of heaven above and below may my glory be addressed."*

An ancient hymn extols her praise :

" The light of heaven, who blazeth like the fire, art thou,
O goddess, when thou fixest thy dwelling place in the earth,
Thou who art strong as earth !
Thee the path of justice approaches.
When thou enterest into the house of man."

The worship of Istar found its way into every branch of the Semitic family except the Arabic. Among the Hittites† she was served by Amazons, warrior priestesses who signified both love and war. By the Assyrians she was regarded rather in her warlike aspect, and was designated as the " lady of onset, strengthener of battle," and the " chieftainess of heaven and earth, who makes perfect the face of the warriors." She was held in high reverence by them and considered " perfect in courage and incomparable in splendour, with an appearance like unto flames of fire."‡ From these descriptions may be gathered some of the characteristics of Assyrian women, both as to their courage and their love.

* Quoted in Sayce's *Ancient Babylonians*.
† They invaded Babylon from Cappadocia.
‡ S. P. Handcock, *Mesopotamian Archæology*.

Esar-haddon* paid much attention to the oracles of encouragement delivered to him from Istar by the priestesses, and regarded the goddess as his mistress. His mother, Naqia, played an important part in her son's reign and acted as regent during his absences. It was in some degree through her influence that the judgment on Esar-haddon's reign is so favourable. He is regarded as having a reasonable and conciliatory disposition, and a largeness of aim; he was a wise and strenuous king, who left his vast domains with a fairer show of prosperity and safety than the Assyrian realm had ever presented at the demise of any of his ancestors; and he presents the noblest and most sympathetic figure among Assyrian kings.† At his death Naqia issued a proclamation calling for obedience to his brothers, one to rule over Babylonia and one over Assyria, and all arrangements were smoothly and promptly carried out.

Ashur-bani-pal, the ruler of Assyria, records how he acquired wisdom in the harem, and "learnt all the knowledge of writing of all the scribes,"‡ and he is the ruler noted for having collected the greatest Assyrian library. He worshipped Istar fervently, and she is said to have appeared to him in dreams, speaking oracles of comfort and success. On one occasion, being threatened with an invasion, he went into her temple, knelt at her feet, told his fears and anger, and was encouraged by her.§ After the account of a battle an inscription says:

* The son of Sennacherib and his successor. Seventh century B.C.

† G. S. Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ The whole account is quoted by Sayce. Compare the parallel case of Hezekiah on his receiving the letter of Sennacherib. 2 Kings xix. 14.

" Istar, the mistress of onslaught and battle, the lover of my priestly office, stood at my side and broke their bows. She broke up their compact line of battle, and in their assembly they exclaimed : ' This is our king.' By her illustrious command they joined themselves to my side."

The famous bas-relief of the king and his queen at a repast in a garden is that of Ashur-bani-pal and his wife ; his couch and her chair* are richly carved, and she is wearing a gorgeous robe and is unveiled. Her attitude is one of companionship with no hint of subordination.† And, as a similar instance of equality, a temple built at Kalkhi to Nabu bears an inscription dedicating a statue to the king Adadmirari, and also to the queen Sammuramat, " the lady of the palace." The cylinder seals used by the dwellers in Mesopotamia often represent a woman accompanied by her husband.

It would be impossible to consider the facts indicated by such reliefs and inscriptions, and to become cognizant of the reverence paid to goddesses, especially to Istar, without realising that woman was not degraded in ancient Babylonia and Assyria, and that certain of her qualities were rightly appreciated. Moreover, this idea is fully borne out in the greatest source yet discovered of the social life of Babylonia—that is, in the Code of Khammurabi.

Khammurabi was the real founder of the greatness of Babylon and his reign may be called the golden age in the history of the city ; he consolidated its power and codified its laws.

" Nineveh was the centre of a kingdom of warriors, Babylon the abode of scholars ; and the well-spring of all this is to be found in the work of Khammurabi."‡

* Compare the Roman custom of men reclining and women sitting at meals.

† A reproduction of the relief is given in S. P. Handcock's *Mesopotamian Archæology.*

‡ R. W. Rogers, in *A History of Babylonia and Assyria.*

The code is the earliest known in the history of the world,* and was obeyed for more than fifteen centuries. Its provisions are remarkable in their justice, and especially so with regard to women; after forty centuries some of them could not be improved. During excavations by the French at Susa, the stone obelisk on which the code is engraved was discovered, and is now one of the most precious possessions in the Louvre.† There are provisions for every section of life: the army, commerce, agriculture and irrigation; theft, sorcery, marriage and divorce; home life and public life; slaves and children. From the laws can be seen a very fair view of woman's position, socially and commercially.

The daughter was the property of her father and did not choose her husband in the eyes of the law; her father could legally pledge her for debt, dedicate her to the temple, give her as a wife or concubine, or even sell her as a slave. But she had the right to become a nun in order to avoid an uncongenial marriage, and it may be certain that parental affection prevented, in most cases, recourse to the extremity of the law.

Marriage was a religious as well as a civil contract; the gods were invoked and the contract signed before a priest. A wife of the well-to-do classes was amply provided for: settlements were made at marriage, and anything settled on the wife was hers absolutely, and she could bequeath any of it to her children who inherited the dowry at her death; the husband was bound to allow her "a son's portion" as her pocket money.

"The Code assured to the wife an exact position of comparative freedom, and there are repeated examples of

* It was established before the twentieth century B.C.

† Probably it had been carried away from Babylonia as a trophy by the Elamites, about the eleventh century B.C.

the respect paid to the dignity of motherhood; again and again, too, we find that the woman's point of view is to be heard and considered."*

The wife could act apart from her husband, enter into partnerships, trade with her money, and conduct lawsuits, and thus married women were the legal equals of men.† Although polygamy was exceptional, slaves, both men and women, and concubines are taken as a matter of course, and if a man's wife was childless he could take a subordinate wife in order to obtain legitimate children, but the wife might prevent the secondary marriage by giving a slave to her husband to bear him children.‡ If a man's wife became a permanent invalid he could marry again, but he had to support the first wife unless she preferred to return home. A woman could divorce her husband for adultery or cruelty, and if she disliked him she could apply for a divorce, which she obtained if she was found blameless, but in this case she obtained no maintenance. If a woman committed adultery both she and her lover were drowned unless the husband consented to receive her back, when the king could pardon her lover. If a man deserts his wife she may " enter the house of another," and should the man return he has no claim on her. A man could divorce his wife at his will, but he must then return her dowry, or if she had none he must maintain her; she always kept the children, but the husband made an allowance for them. If a male slave married the daughter of a free man the master of the slave had no claim on the children. The last two provisions

* Florence G. Tidler, in the *English Review*, for October, 1913, where she gives a popular account of woman's position under the Code.

† A. H. Sayce, *Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians.*

‡ Compare the history of Sarai and Hagar.

point to the fact that the mother was considered the more important as a parent. A curious ancient law said that—

> "If a son say to his mother, 'Thou art not my mother,' she can cut off his locks, turn him out of town, or drive him away from home."*

Priestesses were of great consequence in the social life, and a man who insulted one (or a married woman) was branded on the forehead. Several kinds of priestesses existed, some of whom married, others were vowed to chastity, others were nuns, and others were prostitute votaries.† They were under strict rule so that the dignity of their office could be upheld; for instance, a priestess who opens a wine shop, or even enters one, is to be burned.

A good deal of commerce was in the hands of women; they kept shops, and the sale of wine seems to have been almost monopolised by them; the giving of false measure was punished by the woman being thrown into the water, and the harbouring of rebels by her being slain. Beside the Code other indications of woman's share in commerce exist in the form of contract tablets, and it is seen that women were weavers, hairdressers, gate-keepers; they looked after sheep and goats, and possessed plots of ground.‡ Scribes often wrote the tablets, and of the ninety scribes whose names are known ten are women, so it may be concluded that education was given to girls as well as boys.§ Other evidence of this is the fact that women appear as defendants or plaintiffs, as

* This and similar laws are given in Goodspeed's *History of the Babylonians and Assyrians.*

† In the last case the unacknowledged children were always provided for.

‡ See Handcock's *Mesopotamian Archæology.*

§ A. H. Sayce, *Social Life among the Babylonians and Assyrians.*

partners in business, and in other positions which imply some education.

The courts of law were most likely held within the temples, as the chief power lay there, and the duties of Elder and Judge were sometimes exercised by women. The Elders were a permanent body of witnesses whose qualifications consisted of age and residence but not of sex; the only woman judge known by name was the Lady Istarummu.

Far away as were the times with which this chapter deals, some influence has passed from the olden Babylonians and Assyrians through the ages, and therein lies their chief interest and importance to later periods. With regard to women, the habit of monogamy doubtless influenced their Semitic neighbours, including the Hebrews, who, however, scorned the worship of Istar (Ashtoreth). To give an instance farther afield, the Greek Aphrodite and Artemis are two aspects of Istar that became separated and modified in travelling westward.

By the qualities ascribed to goddesses, by the positions held by women and the occupations followed by them, and by their treatment under the laws, it may be presumed that these peoples, fifty centuries ago, had attained a conception of womanhood that cannot be termed insulting or slighting, even if their sensitiveness had not developed in all the directions of modern times. But that lack would exist with regard to the treatment of men also, and the sexes have progressed together towards the finer elements contained in the civilisation of to-day.

CHAPTER IV

HINDUISM

England specially concerned in Indian affairs.—Each land offers differing ideals of womanhood.—The *Vedas*—invocations to goddesses.—Wives of the gods.—The Mahabharata gives reflections of life in early times.—Woman's freedom—stories of Nala and Damayanti, and of Savriti.—Extracts showing accepted ideal of womanhood.—The *Ramayama*—the epic of Indian womanhood.—Sita's devotion and courage.—Simplicity and purity of ancient Hindu domestic life.—Woman's acquiescence in her position. The *Laws of Manu* and their restrictions.—Early marriages, widowhood.—The *Puranas*.—The mother in India—supreme and honoured.—Marriage a spiritual connection—wife the husband's willing subordinate.—Dangers of this position in spite of love.—Economic status. The widow, sadness of her fate, but scope for service.—Famous widows and their works.—Sati (widow-burning) not ordained by sacred books.—Woman's instinct for self-sacrifice.—Suppression of Sati.—Prostitution in India.—Seclusion of women—its origin and extent.—Women in the present—their needs, education, occupations and aspirations.—The woman movement in India and those helping it.—New developments should retain the Indian woman's qualities but direct them to wider uses.

ALL that pertains to India is of interest to Europe, influenced as it has been during the last century by thought from the East. Especially is England concerned in the beliefs and customs of that vast country, since the destinies of each are closely linked, and their diversities can complement each other. England and India might stand as representing the two differing ideals of womanhood, neither of

them complete, but both worthy; when combined they will be not far-distant from the highest type of the womanhood of the future.

There is much in Hinduism to indicate woman's position in the past, and the present is full of signs and portents for her. Throughout the sacred books and the epics are found significant details or episodes showing the status of woman and the estimation in which she was held.

In the Vedas* the invocations and chants are human outpourings, and not specially masculine or feminine. The original idea of religious worship was that it should be performed by a married couple.† The hearth was the altar of sacrifice; the wife had charge of the sacred vessels, and often composed the hymn and prayer; the husband officiated. At religious festivals the wife also participated, and she seems to have been her husband's companion, treated with respect and confidence. This is usual in the primitive times of almost all nations, for, in the process of settling down, women take their share of the burdens and dangers and are regarded with honour. A nearer example are our Teutonic ancestors, whose women—"the old, free, monogamous labouring woman"—walked and worked side by side with their men. In the far-away centuries of the past the women of India walked and worked and worshipped in free and open companionship with the men;

* The most ancient sacred books, consisting of collections of hymns, prayers and invocations, together with appendages of notes and explanations, with speculations on the problems of the Universe and the aims of mankind. The date of their origin is unknown, but they had been long in existence by the eleventh century B.C.

† One of the hymns to Agni, God of Fire, is ascribed to a poetess, Visvavara, and she prays to the god to maintain the well-knit bonds of wife and husband. See R. W. Frazer's *Literary History of India*, and the same author's *Indian Thought*.

together* they gave thanks to life, and poured out their souls in the imagery and poetry of the *Vedas*. Some invocations to goddesses express the awe and gratitude felt towards a feminine deity. To Ushas, goddess of Dawn, a hymn is addressed† which contains such lines as—

" Born in the heavens the Dawn hath flushed, and showing her majesty, is come as law ordaineth.
Rouse us this day to high and happy fortune : to great felicity, O Dawn, promote us.
Vouchsafe us manifold and splendid riches, famed among mortals, man-befriending Goddess !
Looking upon the works and ways of mortals, O Daughter of Heaven, the world's Imperial Lady.
She who is rich in spoil, the Spouse of Surya, wondrously opulent, rules all wealth and treasures.
True with the True, and Mighty with the Mighty, with Gods a Goddess, Holy with the Holy."‡

The Rig-Veda also contains lines in praise of the goddess of Night :

" The goddess Night arrives in all her glory,
Looking about her with her countless eyes.
She, the immortal goddess, throws her veil
Over low valley, rising ground and hill,
. . . . .
Receive, O Night, dark daughter of the Day
My hymn of praise which I present to thee,
Like some rich offering to a conqueror."

To Sarasvati, wife of Brahma the Creator, are attributed the qualities of wisdom, invention and imagination. She is the patroness of fine arts, music and rhetoric, and the goddess of speech. In this last capacity she says

* On this point of companionship in worship see R. W. Frazer's *Indian Thought*, Chapter XI. Temple worship is open to both sexes at the present time.
† Quoted in *Hinduism*, by L. D. Barnett.
‡ Rig-Veda VII, 75.

" Whom I love I make mighty, I make him a Brahman, a Seer and Wise . . .
I have revealed the heavens to its inmost depths, I dwell in the waters and in the sea,
Over all I stand, reaching by my mystic power to the height beyond.
I also breathe out like the wind, I, first of all living things,
Beyond the heavens and this earth I have come to this great power."*

The invention of the Sanskrit language is ascribed to her, and students especially worship her as " Mother of the Vedas." Lakshmi, the wife or active energy of Vishnu the Preserver, possesses exceptional charm and beauty, and is the goddess of fortune.† A description of her shows the inseparable character of the gods and their wives :

" . . . the bride of Vishnu, the mother of the world is eternal, imperishable. As he is all-pervading she is omnipresent. Vishnu is meaning, she is speech ; he is polity, she prudence ; he understanding and she intellect ; he righteousness and she devotion. In a word, Vishnu is all that is called male and Lakshmi all that is called female ; there is nothing else than they."‡

The worship of the Saktis, or feminine energies or counterparts of the gods, was very extensive, and shadows forth the Hindu idea of sexual dualism which regards the feminine as necessary and as important as the masculine, though diverse from it. Siva's sakti is known under many names, of which the beneficent are Uma and Parvati,§ and the malignant Durga and Kali. The great festival of the year is that of Durga ; but every village has its own guardian " Mother," the

* Quoted by Clodd, in *Magic in Names.*

† Sita, the ideal of Indian womanhood, is said to be one of her incarnations.

‡ From the *Vishnu Purana.*

§ Stories of Uma and Parvati may be found in Margaret Noble's *Cradle Tales of Hinduism.*

goddess who is praised and worshipped, who sometimes needs propitiation and always received prayers.*

The wedding of Soma and Surya, † the Sun and Moon, may be taken as typical of an earthly marriage, and in the account fortune, prosperity and sons are besought for the bride and bridegroom. For the bride is the wish expressed that she may rule over her household, and the assembled people are bidden to wish her good fortune. On taking her by the hand the bridegroom declares that the gods have appointed her head of his household, and on reaching her new home the bride is asked to bring down a blessing on all who dwell there.‡

Such reverence to divine women could not but react on earthly women, whose position had in the first instance given the goddesses their honour. It has been said that—

> "Among the early Aryans, the paternal and maternal tie and even the whole family bond, was intensely strong. . . . If the father was venerated as the food-supplier and protector (Pita), the mother was beloved as the meter-out (Mata) of daily nourishment—the arranger of the household, measuring and ordering its affairs as the moon (also called Mata) measured time. To the Aryan family the father and the mother were present gods."§

Glimpses such as these may be obtained of woman's position from Vedic hymns, but another source is more fruitful. In the days when the forefathers of the race were still wanderers, character, will, strength were the standards; and codes, rules, laws were as yet undeveloped. But the legends and stories of a people

* A long account of Mother-worship is given in *The Popular Religion and Legends of Northern India*, by W. Crooke.

† Rig-Veda X, 83.

‡ The account is given in *A Literary History of India*, by R. W. Frazer.

§ Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*.

are always a reflection of their life coloured by the atmosphere of the time, and formed by prejudices, superstitions, sentiments, ideals. And not only do they reflect the life of the time, but they also in their turn influence it, and so carry on traditions and aspirations. The Epics of India* for ages have been, and still are in a lesser degree, an inspiration to every Hindu child. What philosophy and laws could never do, poetry and stories are able to accomplish ; for the former touch the minds of but a few, but the latter reach the hearts of all.

From the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* can be obtained a picture of the womanhood of India many centuries before the Christian era. Though not historical with regard to events, the *Mahabharata*, like all epics, presents a true account of its times, and it is from various episodes narrated in the poem that woman's position can be gathered. Many ancient customs are depicted, such as the festivals when a princess chose her husband. At these Swayamvaras, which may be compared to the tournaments of the Middle Ages, the lady crowned the knight of her choice. Amid the blaze of banners, jewels and flowers, the princes and nobles who sought the hand of the princess were seated on thrones, and surrounded with heralds and minstrels. As she slowly went round the huge hall, the princess listened to the names and achievements

* The *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. The former celebrates the deeds of Krishna and the adventures of the Bharatas. A dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, which expounds the loftiest moral sentiments, and takes place on the eve of a battle supposed to have been fought near Delhi, is well known in Western countries as the *Bhagavadgita*. The *Ramayana* tells the story of Rama and his queen Sita with their many adventures in exile. These two personages have formed the national ideals since about the fourth century B.C. The *Mahabharata* existed as a whole by 150 B.C., and portions of it date earlier. See the article, " Sanskrit," in *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

of each suitor as recited by the heralds, and finally made her choice by throwing a garland round the head of the accepted one. Even now the custom still obtains of honouring a guest or orator, either Hindu or English, by placing a wreath over his head, and the practice is sometimes adopted in England when a Hindu speaker appears on a platform or at a ceremony.*

In the beautiful story of Nala and Damayanti, there is a detailed account of a *swayamvara* sufficiently proclaiming the freedom of women, and from the same tale may be gathered the fact that monogamy was the recognised condition even in those early times. Nala says to Damayanti, when he is the chosen one :

> " Since thou, O blessed one, hast chosen me . . . know me for a spouse to whom thy every wish shall be sacred. Truly do I promise thee that as long as life remains I shall be thine, and thine alone."

No question of superiority or inferiority arises between this wife and husband.†

Another story, that of Savitri, who has been called the Indian Alcestis, illustrates the fact that the re-marriage of widows was unknown as early as the days of the *Mahabharata*. Savitri knows that her husband is doomed to be taken away by the god of Death, Yama, but she attempts to frustrate this purpose. By keeping vigil and fasting for three days and nights her senses were raised to extraordinary acuteness, so that she could see and hear what is unknown to

* The interesting ceremony was witnessed in the summer of 1912, when the Honourable Mr. G. K. Gokhale spoke on behalf of India, in London. He was the founder of the Servants of India Society, and died in 1915. The King and Queen of England were garlanded by a Hindu lady on one of their visits to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in May, 1924.

† See the story of Nala and Damayanti, in *Cradle Tales of Hinduism*, by Margaret Noble.

ordinary mortals; and therefore when Yama came to bind and take away the soul of her husband, she saw him, and arose, and followed. In order to get rid of her, Yama tells her to ask for anything she likes, except her husband's life, and then go home. But Savitri still follows, and each time she asks a favour for someone else—for her father-in-law, for her husband's home, but never for herself. At last Death noticed this, and turning once more said, "Ask something for yourself, Savitri. Anything but your husband's life shall be yours. But this shall be my last gift; you must go when it is granted." So Savitri asked that she might have many sons and see their children happy before she died. Death acceded, but she still waited. "That is all," he said. "Have I not granted it?" Then Savitri looked at him and smiled. "My lord," she said, "a widow does not re-marry!" A moment the god stared at her, and then burst into laughter; he had been despoiled by a woman's love and persistence and wit. "Peerless among women," he exclaimed, "is that brave heart that follows her husband even into the grave, and recovers his life from Yama himself. Thus do the gods love to win defeat at the hands of mortals."

A few other extracts from the *Mahabharata* will describe the accepted ideal of women at that time, which, like all other true ideals, is high and perfect at the time of its formulation, but which needs expansion as environment changes in the course of centuries. In its limited sphere, not many conceptions could excel the following:

> "A woman is half the man, his truest friend—
> A loving wife is a perpetual spring
> Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife
> Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;

A sweetly speaking wife is a companion
In solitude ; a father in advice ;
A mother in all seasons of distress ;
A rest in passing through life's wilderness."*

A woman herself gives the following description of woman's duties, when, in the story of Siva and Uma, the god asks :

" Thou, that dost know the self and the not-self. . . . O, Daughter of Himalaya, of fairest eyebrows, and whose hair ends in the fairest curls, expound to me the duties of women in full."

And Uma answers :

" The duties of women are created in the rites of wedding, when in presence of the mystical fire she becomes the associate of her lord, for the performance of all righteous deeds. She should be beautiful and gentle, considering her husband as her god and serving him as such in fortune and misfortune, health and sickness, obedient even if commanded to unrighteous deeds or acts that may lead to her own destruction. She should rise early, serving the gods, always keeping her house clean, tending the domestic sacred fire. Devotion to her lord is woman's honour, it is her eternal heaven, and . . . I desire not paradise itself if thou art not satisfied with me ! "

This attitude of utter submission generated by a deep but unreflecting love is that of many Hindu women of to-day. If it is inspired by an inner prompting and the man be worthy of it, a very different aspect is given to the case from that produced by imposing it as a duty.

A hint at woman's intuitive faculties is given in the saying that " Women are by nature instructed, while the learning of men is taught them by books."

But it is in the *Ramayana*, the epic of womanhood, that the real woman-soul of India can be seen ; it is pictured there perfectly in all its devotion, tenderness

* *Mahabharata*, Book I.

and strength. The story is of Rama, king of Ayodhya, and his queen Sita, who dominates the poem. No one force has done so much towards moulding Hindu women as the story of Sita, and many a girl's prayer has been, "Make me a wife like Sita; give me a husband like Rama." Margaret Noble says:*

> "As Mary the Madonna to the women of Christendom, so is Sita, Queen of Ayodhya, to them of Hinduism. Hers indeed is a realm beyond the aspirations of merely earthly sovereigns. For she is the ideal of womanhood itself, and she wields undisputed sway, in millions of hearts, over the kingdom of love and sorrow and stainless womanly honour and pride. Though beautiful and a queen, she never chose ease. To her the simple lives of saints and scholars were more joyous than all the luxuries of courts. She knew every mood of the forest, joining in their praise in the early morning, when birds wake, and blossoms open, and dew is fresh; and bowing her soul with theirs in evening adoration. She shared a throne, yet never forgot that for their people's good, and not for their own pleasure, do sovereigns reign. She knew the highest human happiness, and was not blinded by happiness. She knew the deepest and bitterest sorrow, and lived serene amidst her sorrow. Such was Sita, Queen of Ayodhya, crowned of love, veiled in sorrow, and peerless among women."

In all Sita's actions love is the impelling force, yet she is free and unsecluded. When her husband is exiled she voluntarily decides to go with him, and on his attempt to dissuade her, as the life will be too hard for her, she pleads with him, and makes out it will be for her own good, saying:

> "A wife must share her husband's fate. My duty is to follow thee
> Where'er thou goest. Apart from thee I would not dwell in heaven itself. . . .
> Thou art my king, my guide, my only refuge, my divinity.
> It is my fixed resolve to follow thee. . . .

* In *Cradle Tales of Hinduism*. See also the same author's *Web of Indian Life*, for an appreciation of Hindu social custom.

> . . . To me the shelter of thy presence
> Is better far than stately palaces or paradise itself.
> Protected by thy arms, gods, demons, men, shall have no power to harm me."

In the long exile of the king and queen, in the capture of Sita, at her return, and when suspicions fall upon her, she acts independently and fearlessly, and loves her husband unceasingly. He appreciates her devotion and loves her, saying

> " Her presence is ambrosia to my sight,
> Her contact fragrant sandal ; her fond arms
> Twined round my neck, are a far richer clasp
> Than costliest gems, and in my home she reigns
> The guardian goddess of my fame and fortune."

Sita is the true hero of the epic ; and as she has been the ideal of Indian women of the past, so her characteristics will be the salient ones in the Indian women of the future. These characteristics, however, will need to be exercised in different directions and to wider ends. The ideal of womanhood that is shown in the old epics is one of silence and shadow, serenity and strength ; but beautiful as it is, the formulation of these qualities into fixed rules for daily doings does not suit the changed conditions of to-day. Qualities remain, but their use and proportionate value change, and an ideal ceases to be such when it is reached and passed in the progress of the ages. The rightful position of an ideal is in front, changing and receding as it is approached, and thus offering fresh scope for effort and advance. Perhaps a settled ideal of womanhood is that which most men and some women, all over the world, desire to keep most tenaciously in its original position, not realising that this would result in fixing it into that most unideal thing—a mere convention.

From these ancient poems can be gathered something of the simplicity and purity of Hindu domestic life of old. The wife was obedient to her husband, but otherwise she possessed freedom. She gave her lord measureless love and submission ; she, more than the women of other races, reached the farthest point of self-immolation for her beloved, and the present position of women in India has come about as much through her will as through the instinct of dominance in the man. She sees the result now, and will learn to use the capacity for self-sacrifice to ends nobler and better both for herself and her menfolk. There is a luxury in self-surrender that requires restraint as well as does the desire to overrule. In rare cases, perhaps, the man realises that it is a quality in the woman, and not any special one in him, that urges such power of loving and giving, and therefore he accepts it humbly, and repays it by such tenderness and protection as he can exercise. Devotion is the great characteristic of the Hindu women depicted in the stories which they have absorbed through the centuries, and devotion has therefore been propagated from one generation to another. It is a quality that, rightly directed, is capable of permeating and elevating the whole national life.

The *Laws of Manu* are not the works of a single hand, but rather represent the growth of custom.* As the Epics represent the ideals of a people, so these laws embody their practice, for legislation is but a secondary thing, and points rather to the defects than the aspirations of a nation. This collection of

* Some compilation of precepts and regulations was probably drawn up about the fifth century B.C. by one person, but it has been considerably extended during the course of years.

precepts* covers all varieties of human life, and forms the authority for most of the religious observances. They are a peculiar mixture of high and low, wise and foolish maxims and restrictions, and among them are many and various rules regarding women and their duties, rules which perhaps express the wish of the priestcraft as to women's restrictions, rather than the reality of practical life, but which have had an evil influence in the direction of women's subjection. The probability is that but few women know of the existence of the commands which have helped to restrict their personality and activity, though the effect has penetrated to the very groundwork of the general attitude towards the sex. Here and there, however, are found sayings which show that woman is honoured, yet these are strangely contradictory of the main tone.

"Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; where they are dishonoured, religious acts are of no avail," is one of the precepts of Manu; and another, "The home which is cursed by a woman perishes utterly as if destroyed by a sacrifice for the death of an enemy," shows somewhat the same feeling of a superior mystical power in women that the early Teutonic nations attributed to them. Though nothing is said against women teaching, and though women-*gurus* (wandering teachers) have existed and do exist, yet the *Laws of Manu* imply that all the education necessary for a woman is such as to enable her to minister to her husband,† and she is forbidden to read the Vedas:

* Sometimes known as the Dharma-Sastras. The code of laws drawn up by the English Government in 1776 as a guide to officials in India was based on the Code of Manu.

† Compare Luther's saying: "No gown worse becomes a woman than the desire to be wise."

" Women have no concern with the text of the Vedas. This is lawfully settled. Having therefore no evidence of law and no knowledge of expiatory texts, sinful woman must be as foul as falsehood itself. And this is a fixed rule."*

In the laws of Manu a woman is never regarded as an individual, but is always considered in relation to some man : father, husband, brother, son.

Yet the daughter is valued equally with the son for it is said, " A man's own son is even as himself, and his daughter like a son."† And the birth of one particular daughter‡ is announced thus : " A girl, my liege ; better than many boys."

The mother, as such, is only seldom mentioned in Manu, but when she is, all the reverence characteristic of the Hindu is paid to her. " Let thy mother be unto thee like a god " commands that respect and obedience that is almost without exception paid by the sons ; and " A mother exceedeth in value a thousand fathers " shows the recognition of a mother's care and love and influence on her children, young and old ; while " The man who kisses the feet of his mother finds himself in heaven " idealises the relationship to an extent reached by no other religion. On the duties of a wife the *Laws of Manu* are explicit. No woman can take vows of celibacy as a man can, and practically all Indian women are married. A man, however, is not considered complete until he marries and has children :

" Then only is a man a perfect man
When he is three—himself, his wife, his son—
For thus have learned ones the law declared,
A husband is one person with his wife."§

* Manu V, 155. Compare this with Henry VIII's rule, that no woman should read the chained Bible in the churches unless a man were by to explain it to her. (Selden.)

† Manu IX, 30.

‡ That of Savitri.

§ Manu IX, 45.

Faithfulness is impressed on the husband as well as the wife :

> " Fidelity till death, this is the sum
> Of mutual duties of a married pair."*

Even in religious performances neither a man nor woman is sufficient alone. A woman is not allowed to perform a sacrifice nor any religious rite without her husband ; and the necessity for the wife's presence is pictured in the *Ramayana* when Rama cannot proceed with any ceremonies to the gods until a golden statue is made of his wife Sita, who is in voluntary exile for his good.

But implicit obedience is demanded from the wife, who should strive in all ways to please him, for he is literally her lord and master :

> " Though unobservant of approved usages or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must be constantly revered by a good and virtuous wife.
>
> " A faithful wife who wishes to attain
> The heaven of her lord, must serve him here
> As if he were a god, and ne'er do aught
> To pain him, whatsoe'er be his state
> And even though devoid of every virtue.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Let her be ever cheerful, skilled in all
> Domestic work and not too free in spending."†

Some such attitude was openly acknowledged and

* Manu IX, 101.

† Dharma Shastras or Manu V. Compare such passages with Eve's speech :

> " O thou for whom
> And from whom I was formed, flesh of thy flesh
> And without whom am to no end, my guide
> And head, what thou hast said is just and right.
> My author and disposer, what thou biddest
> Unargued I obey, so God ordains.
> God is thy law, thou mine, to know no more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."
>
> Milton, *Paradise Lost,* Book IV.

accepted by both men and women; the particular working out of the dictum depends on the character of each. In practice, and as long as women acquiesce, the results are not so tragic as some would imagine, since few problems arise in which the wife would wish to act contrary to her husband's wishes, as is sometimes the case in the West. Her subordination, however, retards the awakening of any desire for public duties, though here also it must be remembered that only a minority of Hindu men have public duties.

Early marriages are also enjoined in the *Laws of Manu*. This practice probably arose because the father wished his daughters settled as early as possible, since no other career was open to them, and also in order that he might have a male descendant to perform certain religious rites after his death, without which his soul could not attain rest. Climatic influences in addition are conducive to early sexual development. A man may marry as often as he pleases, but no second husband is allowed to widows. Yet nowhere in Manu is there any allusion to Sati, the practice of widow-burning. The re-marriage of widows is mentioned, but reprehended, except in the case of a damsel who has been given in marriage but whose husband dies before the marriage is consummated. A widow is constrained to a life of asceticism and sorrow:

> "Let the widow emaciate her body by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots and fruit, but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man. Let her continue until death forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incorruptible rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as have been devoted to one husband."*

* Manu V.

The general effect of these teachings is deep and widespread; they have filtered through all Hindu society, and the consequence is a greater strictness and more rigid rules than the writers probably originally intended. Incipient rebellion on the part of women is referred to the *Laws of Manu*, which usually form a sufficient restraining authority.

However, it is rather the results of the fixity and degeneration of woman's position as indicated by the *Puranas** that has initiated the stirrings of revolt that are now beginning to be manifested in India. Although little is found with special reference to women in these scriptures, what does occur exhibits a strong tendency to increase their restrictions and subordination. The *Puranas* are considered the most suitable of the writings of Hinduism for the learned woman to read, and they exhort her to implicit obedience to her husband, whether he be "deformed, aged, infirm, offensive in his manners, choleric, debauched, immoral, a drunkard, a gambler," and so on. They also enjoin her to be burnt alive on her husband's funeral pyre, a duty which neither the *Vedas* nor the *Laws of Manu* mention.

Thus from these varying scriptures, which have been reflections and moulders in turn, can be gathered something of woman's olden position in Hinduism; the Epics give us ideals, while Manu depicts custom. For side by side with expression in words there grows expression through attitude, manners, institutions, customs, not only with regard to religion *per se*, but also with regard to every province in life, and "It is done" is as valuable and vital as "It is written." Therefore the customs of a nation manifest its soul,

* Of much later date than the other sacred writings, having gathered form between the sixth and twelfth centuries A.D. They consist of lives of saints, stories of miracles and various traditions.

and, in the wider sense of the word, its religion. Throughout India the supremacy of the mother is the dominating factor in the value set upon womanhood. It is decreed* that—

> "The teacher is ten times more venerable than the learned exponent of the scriptures, a father a hundred times more than the teacher, and the mother a thousand times more than the father."

Sashti, the goddess of mothers, is worshipped, and the worship passes to the mother herself. She is head of all, and rules a home that contains many families, for the sons bring their girl-wives to their own homes instead of forming a new one. The mother is head, and this in virtue of service to all. The tie between mother and son is a beautiful and strong one; no other can be compared with it. He renders her obedience and reverence though he be a grown man. Of course the mother's authority is sometimes abused and in her hands lies the happiness of the sons' wives. But her influence extends far beyond the walls of her home, though she herself seldom leaves it. What that influence will be when the woman is educated and realises her wider responsibilities is incalculable; and it may come about that in India, in that land of thought and feeling, whose very plants breathe out devotion, women will awake to a consciousness of their present position and pass on to the realising of a nobler one, without the transition stage where all the talk is of wrongs and all the blame is placed on men. That there are wrongs is unquestionable, but the blame, if blame can be attached to conditions that are fought as soon as realised, is to be shared between man and woman—on the one for not wanting

* In the Law Book of Vasishta. See R. W. Frazer's *Indian Thought*.

more from woman than the satisfaction of his desires and the keeping of his house, and on the other for yielding to that demand without withstanding the loss of her own individual qualities. However, it is not a question of assigning blame, but rather of taking up new duties and developing dormant powers. In the gradual age-long evolution of the relationship of the sexes, the various aspects emerge slowly, and it is waste of energy and time to blame or grumble. Let us *go on*, cries the awakened womanhood, learning from the past, but looking to the future.

Marriage was a spiritual connection as well as a bond of love, and wifehood was almost a religion in itself to the Hindu woman, involving the greatest love and self-surrender. Young girls worshipped Siva and Krishna, and prayed for a worthy husband and the gift of sons. Supreme devotion to her husband was the first duty of a wife, but his first love was given to his mother. To his wife he owed tenderness and protection, but there was seldom equality between them. With her consent he was literally her lord and master; she prostrated herself before him, prepared his food and waited on him while he ate, but touched nothing herself until he had finished. Yet she was in no sense his property, and an ancient law forbade the gift of money from a bridegroom to the bride's father, on the ground that the parent could not sell his daughter.* In the marriage ceremony also there is no promise of obedience from the bride. "Let us live together and take counsel of one another," says the bridegroom; and again, as they walk round the sacred fire, "By taking these seven steps we become friends." Therefore the subjection of the

* See Legouvé's *Histoire morale des Femmes*.

wife is not established in words as in the English Church Service; but it is real enough, and the ultimate harm resulting from such an unequal relationship falls on both, man as well as woman. Master and servant cannot be companions, nor reach the full rapture of union to which two souls, equal and akin, can attain. The man cannot realise all that a woman's friendship in addition to passion, all that her mind in addition to her heart can give; the woman's innate capacities are crushed down by the false idea that man needs but one thing from her, and that it is her duty to supply that and no more. But this idea does not permeate the whole attitude, and women are aware of the value of their sex. In the most famous play in Hindu literature,* Sakuntala says

> "The wife is man's half. The wife is the first of friends. The wife is the root of virtue, wealth and pleasure. The wife is the root of salvation. Sweet-speeched wives are ever near in times of joy. They are ministering helps in hours of sickness and sorrow. . . . A wife therefore is man's most treasured wealth. No man, even in his anger, should do aught that is displeasing to his wife, for on her depends happiness, joy and virtue."

In spite of her restrictions the Hindu wife shows independence of character, courage and firmness; her subjection to her husband does not necessarily imply weakness. The economic status of the woman of the richer classes is fairly independent, for her marriage portion is her own, as are gifts from kindred, and ornaments and jewels. None of these may her husband touch.† But wifehood in India is thought

* *Sakuntala*, by Kalidasa, the leading dramatist, who flourished about the sixth century A.D.

† Compare the position of the English woman before the passing of the Married Women's Property Act.

great according to its giving, not to its receiving or sharing. In fact the wife is sometimes asked to give even a share of her husband, since, if she is childless for seven years, he may, *with her permission*, legally take another wife in order to leave a son to succeed him. The sense of family obligation, exceptionally strong in India, frequently causes the wife to agree, and even to help to choose the second wife. A recent writer has quoted the case of a Maharani, living at present, who is childless; whether her husband will ask or she will give permission for another wife cannot be known, but it is an instance of a dilemma and a sorrow peculiarly Indian so long as that law remains.

The practice of early marriages and female infanticide are closely connected, for each was adopted partly on account of the disgrace attaching to parents whose daughters are unmarried. A son can conduct his parents' funeral ceremonies, and thus give their souls entrance into heaven; he is also a promise of support for old age, but a daughter has to be married and much expense is laid out on the ceremony. A curious contradiction is afforded in the reverence paid to mothers, and the comparative indifference to daughters and sisters; even if this can be explained by the opinion that a woman has only fulfilled the end of her destiny when she has become a wife and mother, yet, since practically every woman in India does reach that condition, the contradictory element still remains. But probably the problem of the attitude towards girls is at base an economic one rather than a depreciation of the sex. Early marriages are partly responsible for woman's subjection, as the girl has no time to realise herself or to think out any problems

either in her own life or in the world around, before she is immersed in a household where all her duties are ready, and little initiative is required. To love her husband, whatever he is, is her vocation, and if she loves it is fatally easy for her to obey, and so she falls into the way of yielding to the greatest pressure and stifling any dawning instincts of unconventionality. In considering the general position of girl and boy, husband and wife, man and woman, only a very general conclusion can be reached. The play of character must be allowed for, as individuality can always make itself felt, and the so-called suppression of women in India, and indeed everywhere, is due as much to her acquiescence as to man's domination. Rebels have suffered, but the great mass have followed the line of least resistance, and their condition will continue until they themselves resolve that it shall cease.

It is the position of the widow that holds most of interest and tragedy, and her fate will be the most changed in the future. A widow may not marry again,* even if she has never seen her husband before he dies. All her ornaments and jewels are taken from her and she is expected to live henceforth a life of self-denial and asceticism. The widow's sad life shows in a concrete form the underlying idea regarding a woman's use to the world; she is there to satisfy a man, she cannot marry again, therefore why should she be beautiful, why dress well, why indeed live at all? A modern Indian poetess, Sarojini Naidu, has a pathetic lament on this subject:

* According to Tacitus widows were forbidden to remarry in early Teutonic tribes.

" What longer need hath she of loveliness
Whom death hath parted from her lord's caress ?

. . . . .

Shatter her shining bracelets, break the string
Threading the mystic marriage beads that cling,
Loth to desert a sobbing throat so sweet.

. . . . .

Divest her of her azure veils, and cloud
Her living beauty in a living shroud."*

And the same sweet singer, in a lament voiced by the famous Lilavati, causes her to say :

" For my sad life is doomed to be, alas,
Ruined and sere like sorrow-trodden grass,
My heart hath grown, plucked by the wind of grief,
Akin to faded flower and fallen leaf,
Akin to every lone and withered thing
That hath foregone the kisses of the spring."†

But, as a strange compensation, in the very condition of widowhood many a woman finds scope for her energies, and an outlet for activities that might be stifled in a home. The widow turns her thoughts and powers to things unknown and uncared for by the wife and mother. Several become nurses or teachers ; those who become regents of property on the death of their husbands show such great business capabilities and practical ability, that a saying has grown to the effect that an encumbered property " needs a widow's nursing " in order to retrieve it. Nearly all the Indian women famed in history have been widows : Lilavati, a famous mathematician of the twelfth century, to whom her father, Bhascara, dedicated the first treatise on arithmetic possessed by the Hindus ; Chand Bibi, who defended Ahmedmagar against

* From " The Dirge."
† From " Vasant Panchami."

Akbar* and was killed in 1599; the Ranee of Jhansi, who fought against the British in defence of her state during the Indian Mutiny and was the only native ruler who defeated them, though she was finally slain in battle; the Mahratta Queen of Indore, Ahalya Bai, who was noted for her public works and administrative power; and the list might be extended almost indefinitely. Before she was a widow, Nur Jahan,† the wife of the Emperor Jahangir,‡ practically ruled the kingdom at his desire and with his admiration.

> "Coins were struck bearing her name, as did also the great seal affixed to the Imperial patents. By degrees she became supreme in the empire. The Emperor used to say that she was capable of conducting all affairs, and that all he wanted was a joint and a bottle of wine to keep him merry."§

More suited to each other were the Emperor Shah Jahan‖ and his wife, Arjamund Banu Begum, for whom the splendid Taj Mahal was built.

> "The later Hindu period teems with women of commanding genius and ability. The Maratha widowed Queen, Ahalya Bai, who died in 1795, was a woman who stands out alone in India as supreme for wisdom, piety, and incessant labour and good work. She raised Indore from a group of hovels to a wealthy city, and in Malwa she is still worshipped as a deity. . . .
>
> The Begum of Bhopal . . . before her marriage always

* The famous king Akbar (1556–1605) made widow remarriage legal, prohibited the practice of widow-burning unless it was voluntary, and forbade infant marriage. See R. W. Frazer's *Literary History of India*, and E. A. Freeman's *History and Conquest of the Saracens*.

† The Lalla Rookh of Thomas Moore's poem, and the "Mistress of Men" of Mrs. F. A. Steel's novel.

‡ Who reigned 1605–1607.

§ Written by Sir Thomas Roe, James I's ambassador to the Court of Jahangir.

‖ It must be remembered that these two monarchs were Mohammedans.

attended durbar in open court and administered justice. Her mother . . . ruled with inflexible will and skill."*

As intellectual beacons for women some Hindu women might be compared to the learned abbesses and nuns of mediæval Europe. Even in the times of the *Upanishads* † women are therein seen taking part in controversies with men. In one of them‡ the priest and his wife, Maitreyi, discuss philosophical speculations, but she would be exceptional. Yet the same priest was pressed with questions regarding the nature of the Supreme by a woman in public assembly, and when he could not reply he said, " O Gargi, thou askest too much about a deity about which we are not to ask too much." In this connection may be mentioned the women hermits continually appearing in the literature of India: Sita converses with one during her exile,§ and many of the dramas have these wise women as important characters. In other spheres also widows took their place, and as teachers, nurses, and helpers of various kinds, they correspond to a certain degree with the unmarried " citizen " woman of our own times, but their marriage has given them a broader, more human, standpoint than is sometimes adopted by the European, especially the English, unmarried woman.

One tragic result of the enforced isolation of widows, many of them young, must not be overlooked. The death of a husband does not always permanently atrophy the power of loving, and it does frequently render the widow economically dependent, as well as

* R. W. Frazer, *Indian Thought*, Chapter XI.

† About the sixth century B.C. They consist of the teachings of various sages.

‡ The *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*.

§ See Frederika Macdonald's *Iliad of the East*.

without interest in life, if she has no children. Such circumstances as these are occasionally the cause of the woman either forming relations with another man that are legally wrong but may be morally right, or of her earning her livelihood by prostitution. And for these results the system is to blame rather than innate depravity, for, could the women re-marry, their lives would run in very different currents. It may be concluded that widow re-marriage and the abolition of child-marriage* are two of the coming reforms in India; they will come gradually through the changing ideas and desires of both men and women, through rebels and struggles, through the quiet growth of a different attitude induced by a wider education. At present it is but rarely that companions in age and education come together; at present a cultured man can only find his peer among widows, and marriage with one of these means social ostracism, for a widow may not even breathe the name of another man. As the girl becomes more educated, however, her girlhood will of necessity extend itself, which will be to the benefit of herself and of her future husband.

The practice of Sati† (Suttee or widow-burning) needs some consideration, but its origin is unknown. There is no mention of it either in the *Vedas* or *Manu*, but in the *Mahabharata* is given the story of Madri, wife of Pandu, who became a Sati (faithful or devoted wife). The custom may have been borrowed from the Scythians, by whom it was practised according to

* Mrs. Besant made a powerful plea against early marriages at the Universal Races Congress, held at London University, July, 1911.

† The name is that of the wife of Siva, who burned herself at Jvala-Mukti in the Punjab. It is one of the four Hindu places of pilgrimage.

Herodotus.* It seems to have prevailed in India as early as Alexander's invasion (about 325 B.C.) from the accounts of Strabo,† who speaks of a tribe in the Punjab which made a law that wives should be burnt with their husbands in order to prevent the men from being poisoned by their wives! The underlying reason was probably a nobler one, and might have arisen through the idea that the husband needs the wife even after death, and therefore she follows him into the unknown in order to continue her devotion to him;‡ and imbued with the idea that she lived only for him, the widow would feel her life was ended with that of her husband. The first authentic account of Sati in Hindu writings occurs in the early part of the twelfth century A.D. The daughter of a king, and wife of the last Hindu king of Delhi, followed her husband, who had been slain by Mussulman invaders, through the fiery gate—and this in the days when princesses chose their own husbands.

It has been supposed that the intense hold of the practice on the Hindu mind is due to the misinterpretation of a phrase from the Rig-Veda, and to the perpetuation of the idea in later sacred writings. Max Müller says that "this is perhaps the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood," and he regards it as a *wilful* mistranslation. The whole elaborate funeral ceremony seems to bear out the theory of mistranslation; e.g.

* Herodotus IV, 71. He also described a similar practice among the Thracians. V, 5.

† Strabo XV, 30 and 62.

‡ Compare the story of Brynhild, who lay down beside the body of Sigurd on the funeral pyre, saying: "Nor shall the door swing to at the heel of him as I go in beside him," and the recent instance (April, 1923) of Mrs. Rosalind Travers Hyndman, who died that she might be with her husband in case there was personal survival after death, and he needed her.

when the wife lies north of her husband she is raised by a relative, who says :

> " Rise up, O woman, come back to the world of life ; thou art lying by a dead man, come back. Thou hast sufficiently fulfilled the duty of a wife and mother through the husband who wooed thee and took thee by the hand."

These words distinctly indicate that the widow comes away from the pyre, but previously the officiating priest repeats the following words as the widow walks round the pyre :

> " Om ! let those women not to be widowed, good wives adorned with collyrium, holding clarified butter, consign themselves to the fire. Immortal, not childless, not husbandless, well adorned with gems, let them pass into the fire whose original element was water."

The correct version should be :

> " May those women who are not widows draw near with oil and water. Let those who are mothers go first to the altar, without sorrow, but decked with fine jewels."*

The passage, *Amasravo namivah su-ratna a rohantu janayo yonim agre*† (" Without tears, without sorrow, let the wives go up to the altar first "), is the one where the mistake occurs ; the word *agneh* (of fire) was substituted for *agre* (first).‡ On that slender foundation the admonitions to widows were written ! § Thus in the *Brahmi-purana* can be read the following instructions :

* *Vedic Religion*, p. 32.

† Rig-Veda X, 18–27.

‡ According to Mr. F. Hall, Raghu-Naudana was responsible.

§ Compare the mistranslation of a text in Isaiah (iii. 12), " Children are their oppressors and women rule over them." The context shows that Israel is at a low level because, " Women rule over them." But the correct translation is, " Exactors glean them and extortioners rule over them," and this is given in the Greek Septuagint.

> " While the pile is preparing tell the faithful wife of the greatest duty of woman ; she is loyal and pure who burns herself with her husband's corpse. Hearing this, fortified and full of affection, she completes the burning of herself with her husband, and ascends to Swarga (bliss).

But it must be remembered in this, as in other cases where much seems to depend on a text, that no texts are sufficient as impulsions to conduct unless there exists a corresponding chord in human nature to answer the call ; and here the chord is woman's instinct of self-sacrifice for love. The importance of her act of immolation to her husband's well-being after death is another incentive, for it expiates all her husband's sins. It was believed that though her husband had killed a Brahman, broken the ties of gratitude, or murdered his friend, her death atoned for any such deed, and she resided with him in happiness for thousands of years. Even comparatively modern Hindu writings urged the practice of Sati, and the priests always recommended it. The relatives considered themselves disgraced if the widow refused, and often resorted to drugging an unwilling woman, and binding the hapless widow to the pile. If she had consented, and then in fear and regret receded from the pyre, she was considered accursed and defiled ; and the sight has been witnessed of the frightened woman being compelled by priests and relatives to complete the sacrifice. Many shrines have been erected in India to the memory of wives who have thus suffered for their husbands and have been deified in consequence.* Their influence was supposed to protect the worshippers and cause their desires to be fulfilled.

* See *The Popular Religion and Legends of Northern India*, by W. Crooke.

Hindu legislators encouraged widows to burn themselves, though they allowed the alternative of a life of privation. The revival of the custom seems to have been comparatively modern, and was less evident in Southern India than in Bengal, where, as late as 1817, seven hundred and six cases were reported in one year.

The English Government, at the beginning of its rule, practically connived at the practice, for in the Code of Hindu Laws,* the following passage occurs:

> "It is proper for a woman, after her husband's death, to burn herself in the fire with his corpse, every woman who thus burns herself shall remain in Paradise with her husband 35,000,000 years by destiny. If she cannot burn she must in that case preserve an inviolate chastity; if she remains chaste she goes to Paradise; if not, she goes to hell."

In spite of the fierce denunciations of "the first great reformer and apostle of modern India"† against widow-burning, the English Government hesitated to interfere, as widow-burning was enjoined in the *Brahmi-purana*, the Codes of Vyasa, Angiras, etc., and writers who knew the country advised a passive permission.‡ However, in 1829 Bentinck's Law, known as the Sati Act, put an end to the custom under British rule. The Act was passed mainly through the active exertions and moral influence of Ram Mohun Roy, and in spite of some petitions against it.§ At the time the Act was passed the

* Drawn up for the guidance of judicial officers by the Government in 1776, and based on the Laws of Manu.

† Ram Mohun Roy (1774–1853), a Brahman who advocated many reforms and founded the Brahma Somaj (sometimes called the Hindu Unitarian Church).

‡ H. T. Colebrooke and H. H. Wilson. The latter, as late as 1828, strongly disapproved of any interference with the custom.

§ With these petitions may be compared those of some slaves against the abolition of slavery, and also, of later date, the anti-suffrage leagues.

average annual number of widows burned in India was 1,200, but since 1829 the practice has only been carried on in native states, and the last case occurred in about 1880. Thus a strange, inhuman custom has died, although the inner motive-spirit which caused it to arise and live still glows in the heart of the women. But it may be seen that the conception of woman's sphere and purpose had widened when Dayananda Sarasvati,* one of India's later prophets and a product and exponent of Hinduism, forbade child-marriage and allowed the re-marriage of widows. His most drastic and daring reform was the inculcation of the practice of Niyoga, "a temporary union of a person with another of the opposite sex belonging to his or her plane for the raising of issue when marriage has failed to fulfil its legitimate purpose," but it was supposed to be resorted to only in extreme cases.†

One other aspect of womanhood in India must be dealt with, and that a painful one. The problem of prostitution is as great in India as elsewhere, and in considering it attention must be given to the different attitude of Hindus towards sexual life. The custom, still continued, of the worship of the *lingam* and *yoni*, symbols of the sexual organs, is incomprehensible to Western peoples, who do not face facts openly and unconventionally, and who, perhaps, do not realise the wonderful spiritual significance that can be given to all acts in the sphere of sex and reproduction. Hence it is that the temple prostitution of India and

* He died in 1883. He was a monotheist and discarded caste, traditional mythology, and orthodox idolatry. He was hostile to Christianity, and declared the Vedas to be the sole authority of Truth. He founded the Arya Somaj, an association holding that the Vedas contain the faith, and advocating social and political reforms.

† For a discussion of the subject see R. W. Frazer's *Indian Thought*, and Lajpat Rai's *Arya Somaj*.

other parts of Asia has received little understanding from most of those who have written on it, but the rudiments of altruism may lie at the back of it—an intuition that realises the pathetic and sometimes tragic helplessness of man in the grip of natural forces, and desires to serve by satisfying him. Perhaps the dawnings of some spirit of this kind allowed the custom, which at least contains an element of religion in the offering-up of the women of themselves, primarily to a divinity, secondarily to a pilgrim, and which is not composed of the "wickedness" that shocks disappointed and unsuccessful missionaries.

One result of the frank facing of sexual facts by all Indians has been a total lack of the prudery that is so objectionable in the West. Coquetting with men is not practised by the women and girls of the East, nor is there seen any vulgar "play" between girls and boys. In naturalness and sincerity with regard to sex matters the West can well take a lesson from the East.

Among other causes of prostitution in India are the world-wide economic one, due to woman's dependence and underpayment, and only to be abolished by a change in the social system; the many hopeless lives among widows, a cause which will cease to operate when their re-marriage becomes general; and the cantonment system, where large numbers of unmarried soldiers are supplied with women, who are recruited from Indian girls by fair or foul means. This system, impregnable until the sway of militarism has passed, and connived at by the British Government, is a terrible violation of the Hindu spirit towards womanhood, which regards woman as more sacred and secluded than does Western thought.

The seclusion of aristocratic Hindu women dates from the times of the Mohammedan invasions,* and the custom of *purdah* was adopted partly as a means of protecting women from the invaders, and partly in imitation of the Moslem rule and influence. It must be noticed that only the women of the upper classes and those who wish to copy their customs† are secluded. The Indian working woman goes about freely, uncovered, though she sometimes draws her *sari* across her face when directly addressed. Carrying her brass pot and wearing her coloured *sari*, she forms a more graceful and picturesque figure than her Western sister of the poorer classes. That the *purdah* system had its advantages is witnessed by Lady Dufferin, who says

> "The impressions I carried away from my visit to India were invariably pleasant ones. I have never seen women more sympathetic, more full of grace and dignity, more courteous and more successful in the art of giving a really cordial reception to a stranger than those I met behind the *purdah*. . . . I, for my part, consider that under the present condition of Eastern life the Zenana system affords many undoubted advantages."

But it is not a system that can be prolonged in the present day without detriment to womanhood in many ways. Professor Geddes has remarked on the effect to the health and vigour of women :

> "It is the unsufficiency of space, and want of sanitary conditions in the Zenana, and the cloistering of women that are to be condemned. It is not only homicidal but matricidal."‡

And so long as women are thus confined they cannot

* From about the sixth to ninth centuries A.D.

† Those who have pretensions to gentility often adopt the custom. See *The Study of Hinduism*, by Guru Prosad Sen.

‡ Quoted in *The Science-grounded Religion* for June, 1915.

establish their own individuality or give their help to the ordinary concerns of life. In Vedic, Buddhistic, and Puranic periods there was no seclusion of women, so that Islam in India has been detrimental to their freedom. In Bombay and Madras, where Moslem dominion was not so strong, women have comparatively more freedom, while in the Malabar district, where Mohammedanism scarcely penetrated, women's power is much greater, and the regents during the minority of kings have often been women. The throne of Bhopal, though an Indo-Mussulman one, is not seldom held by a woman, for the eldest child of the ruler, irrespective of sex, succeeds; the present ruler has written an account of her life,* and was one of those who witnessed the King's Coronation Durbar, though heavily veiled. A symbolic figure was she, of the progressing woman-spirit still fettered by the past; though she, in the twentieth century, was more secluded than women in the period of the *Ramayana*, for in that poem Prince Rama says †

> "Neither houses, nor vestments, nor ceremony, nor regal insignia, are the screen of a woman. Her own virtue alone protects her. In great calamities, at marriages, at the public choice of a husband by maidens, at a sacrifice, at assemblies, it is allowable for all the world to look on women."

For countless ages the conditions here sketched have obtained, modified slightly now and again, but in effect the same yesterday and to-day. But to-morrow they will change, for the ancient Hindu ideal of womanhood, though beautiful and delicate, is, for the present and future, not the highest and

* *An Account of My Life*, by Her Highness Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam, Ruler of Bhopal. Translated by C. H. Payne.

† In speaking to Vibhishana.

best, since the environment is changing. The main characteristic of the Hindu woman—her devotion—will always be of vital value to the race, but it needs expanding towards other objects without excluding the one now benefited. Let her but see that social affairs and the nation *need* her qualities, and she will give them freely. Her attitude towards her husband must change; not less of love is required, but less submission and loss of her own personality; he should not be her lord, but her partner. Let her but see that this changed attitude will be to his advantage and still more to that of her children, and she will rise to her full nature. Her subordination is in great part due to her own consent; her emancipation will be due chiefly to her own efforts.

Although it cannot be said that a great lady who rules a large household is uneducated, yet of that knowledge which tells the story of the past and its achievements, which presents the world in its present industrial and social condition, and which depicts the marvels of nature and of science, the modern Indian woman is as yet ignorant, and she must remedy this lack if she is to serve her country and her times worthily. The idea that learning is a disgrace has already been crushed. Formerly it was said that only courtesans and prostitutes were cultured, and this because they wished to attract men.* Even at the present day there are a certain number of high schools for girls, and the B.A. degree has been granted to several native women students in Calcutta, while some now come

* Compare the attitude towards the Greek hetæræ, and the prevalent notion in Greece that a "respectable" woman was ignorant. It is possible that the education possessed by a "free woman" was prior to her "free love," and that only in that condition could she find scope for her nature.

to England to study.* Professor Karve's† far-reaching scheme of an All-India Women's University; the circular letter issued by the Government of India‡ asking for views and suggestions as to the education of girls and women; and the proposition by Mr. G. K. Devadhar,§ that there should be a vernacular elementary school for girls in every important village, a school with an English class in the towns, scholarships for poor and intelligent girls, and the training of women teachers and inspectors—these are all indications that better education for all classes of girls is a reform of the not-distant future. But a timely warning has been given by a Hindu woman to her countrywomen:

> "An ideal feminine education, leading to a wider, freer life, is difficult to realise. It must be one that will prepare its pupils for all human duties—those of the household, as mother, daughter, wife, and those of the State as useful members of the community. It must be practical as well as theoretical, physiological as well as psychological. India, with her long centuries of philosophic teaching, may find her methods somewhat prone to abstractions, but she should remember that pure intellect is not all. . . . Beware of too literary an education!"‖

There have been signs of change for some years in India, and the deeper study of the religion of Hinduism, e.g. in the Vedanta philosophy, as well as the expressed desire for political power, are synchronous with the stirrings among Hindu womanhood. Deputations, conferences, and the efforts and opinions of such men

* Particulars of existing agencies for the furtherance of education for women in India are given in *India* for July 14th and October 20th, 1916.

† Of Ferguson College, Poona.

‡ In February, 1916.

§ Member of the Servants of India Society, and Hon. Secretary of the Poona Seva Sadan.

‖ The Maharani of Baroda, in *The Position of Women in Indian Life.*

as the late G. K. Gokhale, Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Krishna Gupta and others, and of such women as the Maharani of Baroda, Sarojini Naidu, and the Pandita Ramabai* point to the fact that the causes and needs of change are many. British rule is responsible for some of the dislocation, for in the industrial and social sphere a change somewhat similar to that in England on the introduction of machinery for the carrying on of various industries is going on. Much of the Indian woman's occupation has gone; the spinning and weaving is now rendered unnecessary by the importation of ready-made goods from Glasgow and Manchester. Not only has this resulted in loss of employment, but also in a certain loss of simplicity, beauty, and dignity in the homes and dress of Indian women. Loss of employment is leading, as it did in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the search for fresh outlets for women's activities; and an ever-increasing number of women are aspiring towards more scope for their sex, especially as the joint-household system, where several families lived together under one head, is breaking up. If the women follow the traditional spirit of Hindu womanhood as expressed throughout the history and literature of India, they will not seek to give less, but to expand and develop their nature. Education is being sought after and obtained, slowly and gradually. So far this refers to the middle classes, and great difficulty is experienced in obtaining teachers, for scholars do not remain long, as many leave on their marriage. The Seva Sadan Sisterhood of Bombay is a significant feature, for it unites Hindu, Parsee, and Moslem women in philanthropic work, and heralds the union of India's daughters

* Died in 1922. The pandita devoted herself to the amelioration of the lot of Hindu widowhood, and founded a settlement at Mukti.

for the purpose of India's welfare. Another indication of the interest beginning to be taken in civic doings is the fact that a few years ago, among the candidates standing for election as Municipal Commissioner in the Civil Service Ward of Allahabad was an Indian woman, Mrs. Mohan Lal Nehru. And there is one native woman lawyer in India employed by the Bengal Government.*

Among the classes where women gain their own livelihood there is scarcely an employment that is not open to them; in great numbers they labour in the fields; they keep shops and sell fish, vegetables, flowers, household articles, fuel, straw, etc., and they have the entire management of the house and family. The economic factor rules all customs, and, as in every country of to-day, causes women of the proletarian class to be much overworked. Changes in other spheres than that of religion must come about before relief in this direction can be obtained. Meanwhile copious useful suggestions for extending the occupations of women have been made by the present Maharani of Baroda,† one of the most progressive of Hindu women, who, while seeing the great need for the active participation of women in civic life, yet has also perceived a mistake made by some European advanced women. She says with insight and common sense:

> "... What is required is not antagonism, but co-operation between the sexes; woman needs the guidance of man to enable her to achieve the highest of which she is capable, as man needs woman's help and sympathy to aid him on his path through life: Feminine individuality is essentially distinct from the masculine. The characteristic

* See *The Position of Women in Indian Life*, by the Maharani of Baroda and S. M. Mitra. The book deals mostly with what European women are doing, and suggests ways in which Indian women might follow their example.

† In *The Position of Women in Indian Life*.

features of both are deeply rooted, and any effort to coerce them would probably mean not evolution but revolution. The great organic distinctions between man and woman will always tend to produce different characteristics in each. Such differences should be fostered not checked, that development may proceed on natural lines, following the guidance of those fundamental dissimilarities which through long ages have been the distinguishing marks of the sexes."*

There is nothing in the religion of Hinduism to forbid women from embracing more of life than before, or from influencing the development of their country. Hinduism becomes what its followers make it; and the spirit of the religion of India, intuitive, brooding, waiting, has much of the essential feminine in it. The very goddesses who are worshipped in temples, and loved in legends, embody the dream of India's future womanhood, and reflect her aspirations. Ushas, the Dawn, gives life and health to all things, and the hymns addressed to her are among the most beautiful passages in the Vedas. Sarasvati, wife of Brahma the Creator, patronises wisdom and science, and learning is dedicated to her service. Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu the Preserver, is the goddess of fortune, and to her are prayers for happiness addressed. Uma, wife of Siva the Destroyer, represents the energy or active power of the god. Aditi is the only goddess mentioned in the Rig-Veda as mother of any of the gods, and she is the impersonation of infinity.† She is the universal all-embracing Nature or Being, while subtly connected with this conception is that of the forgiveness of sins. "Whatever sin we have committed," pray the Hindus, "may Aditi sever us from it."

* In *The Position of Women in Indian Life.*

† Like the Egyptian Maat, and the Greek Themis.

From this picture of Hindu womanhood as expressed in the goddesses formed in her image, embracing all and forgiving all, bestowing life and health, encouraging the growth of knowledge, bringing happiness, and directing energy—doing and being in herself what the goddesses of old symbolised—the individual women of India can gain inspiration and hope, and bring to their awakening country qualities meet for the vastness of its needs in the future. As the mother in India gives the name to the child, so will the woman-spirit of India give the land its ideals of nationality and religion. The future lies in her hand as much as in the hands of man ; together they will re-organise their society and make their land happy. And we may echo what was read at the first Universal Races Congress : *

" Whatever new developments may now lie before the womanhood of the East, it is ours to hope that they will constitute only a pouring of the molten metal of her old faithfulness and consecration into the new moulds of a wider knowledge and extended social function." †

* Held in London, 1911.
† From the paper on *The Position of Women*, by Margaret Noble.

CHAPTER V

BUDDHISM

Buddhism a religion of negation and resignation—this explains its attitude to women—avoidance but no blame to them. —Precepts of the Buddha with regard to women.—Husbands and wives to be faithful, but best not to marry.—Family duties placed high.—Women can attain arahatship (saintship).—Poems by women among canons of Buddhist literature.—Women who helped Buddha and his disciples.—Admission of nuns—rules.—Lay brothers and sisters.—King Asoka—Buddhist missionaries, including the King's daughter, sent to Ceylon.—Shrines to Buddhist goddesses or *Saktis*.—Famous Buddhist women and their deeds.—Buddhist women in Indian drama.—The women of Burmah—their freedom and legal equality with men.—Marriage and divorce, trade and women.—Attendance at pagodas, etc.—Religion only part of the forces moulding relations of the sexes.—Men and women themselves primarily decide their relative spheres. Not text sand writings, but social customs, etc., indicate and determine woman's place.

THOUGH Siddhattha Gotama, the Buddha, the Enlightened One, lived in India, the religion he founded does not flourish in that country, but chiefly in Siam, Burma, and Ceylon, while in parts of China and Japan it forms a secondary religion to Confucianism and Shintoism. As Margaret Noble says,* " Never was there in India a religion known as Buddhism with temples and priests of its own order. There was a tendency towards popularising truths that had previously been regarded as fit only for the

* In *The Web of Indian Life.*

learned, and an immense unofficial enthusiasm for a towering personality, and for the interpretations which were identified with him." Perhaps this fact partly accounts for the different positions held by women in Burma and India.

Buddhism is a religion of negation, of resignation rather than acceptance, and in this fact lies the explanation of its attitude towards women. It does not revile them, as so many of the Christian fathers did, but it advises withdrawal from their danger, at the same time acknowledging that the danger arises from no fault of theirs. The "Four Truths" illustrate that the Buddhist does not think the ideal life lies in meeting and realising all experiences on as high a plane as possible, but in avoiding, and separating from, them—meeting and realising them, if possible, on no plane at all.

"This is the sacred truth of suffering: birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, to be united with the unloved is suffering, to be separated from the loved is suffering, death is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering, in short the fivefold clinging to the earth is suffering.

"This is the sacred truth of the origin of suffering: it is the thirst for being that leads from birth to birth, together with lust and desire which finds gratification here and there; the thirst for pleasures, the thirst for being, the thirst for power.

"This is the sacred truth of the extinction of suffering: the extinction of this thirst by complete annihilation of desire, letting it go, expelling it, separating oneself from it, giving it no room.

"This is the sacred truth of the path which leads to the extinction of suffering: it is the sacred eightfold path, to wit: Right Faith, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Living, Right Effort, Right Thought, Right Self-concentration."*

* From Oldenberg's *Buddha*.

The Buddhist Kunula,* the great Asoka's son, whose eyes have been torn out, says :

" Those who cause me pain ; and those who cause me joy, to all I am alike ; affection and hatred I know not. In joy and sorrow I remain unmoved, in honour and dishonour ; throughout I am alike. That is the perfection of my equanimity." † There is a kind of internal cheerfulness in this, but it is not complete living. In fact it is to be doubted whether any religion which regards natural instincts and health and happiness with suspicion, as do certain aspects of Buddhism and Christianity, can conduce to the ideal life towards which Humanity is slowly progressing. The right direction and use, not the annihilation or ignoring of human forces and desires, should be the aim.

Buddhism may be taken to mean the precepts and sayings of the Buddha, together with the institutions, customs and writings that have gathered round his name. His sayings concerning women are not many, and only to monks does he counsel avoidance of them. When his cousin Ananda, one of his disciples, asks him, " How are we to conduct ourselves, Lord, with regard to womankind ? " Buddha answers, " Don't see them, Ananda."

" But if we should see them, what are we to do ? "

" Keep wide awake, Ananda."

This, however, was advice for those who had left the world. Lay adherents were enjoined to treat women with respect, and the duties of either sex were given equally. On being asked, " What is the best

* For the story see *Legends of Indian Buddhism*, by Eugene Burnouf.

† Oldenberg, *Buddha*.

boon?" Buddha is reported to have given, among many other "highest blessings,"

> "Service to father and mother, the company of wife and child, and peaceful pursuits—this is the highest blessing."*

And the Buddha's greatest conception of love is typified by that of a mother who "even at the risk of her life protects her son." †

In the rules for husbands and wives it will be noticed that no obedience is demanded from the wife. Husbands are admonished to be faithful to their wives, to cause them to be honoured, and to give them suitable ornaments and clothes. Wives are bidden to be chaste, to order their households aright, to be thrifty, and to show skill and diligence in all they have to do. But Buddha himself, like the Christian Paul, thought that unmarried life was the better part. "A wise man," he says, "should avoid married life as if it were a burning pit of coals." ‡ And again, "Full of hindrances is married life, defiled by passion. How can one who dwells at home live the higher life in all its purity?" § It is best, then, according to Buddha, not to marry, but if one does so, then respect and faithfulness are due from each to each. Family duties, indeed, are placed in the first rank, and in one legend Buddha thus addresses his monks:

> "Brahma, O mendicants, dwells in families in which the father and mother are perfectly honoured, perfectly venerated, perfectly served. Wherefore is this? It is because, according to the Law, a father and mother are, for their son, Brahma himself.
>
> "The Teacher, O mendicants, dwells in the families where the father and mother are perfectly honoured, perfectly

* Quoted in *The Path of Light*, by L. D. Barnett.
† See *Early Buddhism*, by T. W. Rhys Davids.
‡ Dhammik-Sutta 21.
§ Terigga-Sutta 47.

venerated, perfectly served. Wherefore is this? It is because, according to the Law, a father and mother are, to their son, the Teacher himself.

"The fire of sacrifice, O mendicants, dwells in those families where the father and mother are perfectly honoured, perfectly venerated, perfectly served. Wherefore is this? It is because, according to the Law, a father and mother are, for their son, the fire of sacrifice itself. . . ."

And in another legend he says

"They perform, O mendicants, a most difficult thing for their child, the father and mother who feed him, bring him up, nourish him with their milk. . . ."*

When the order of monks or mendicants was first established, Suddhodana, Buddha's father, begs that none may be admitted into the brotherhood without his father's and *mother's* permission, thus showing that he considered the children belonged to the mother at least as much as to the father.

Women as well as men can attain Arahatship † (saintship), and among the Canons ‡ of Buddhist literature are some poems of joy and victory, known as *Stanzas of the Female Elders,* wherein is celebrated the attainment of seventy-three women as well as one hundred and seven men to this high level during the lifetime of Buddha. Many women, some rich, were benefactresses to the early Buddhist communities; in fact it has been said that "the stupendous munificence which met the Buddhist Order at every step, proceeded in great measure, perhaps in the greatest measure, from women." § One of these, Visakha, is thus praised by Buddha:

* Quoted in *The Buddha and his Religion,* by J. B. Saint-Hilaire.

† Cullavagga I, 1, 3. 4.

‡ The Tripika or Three Baskets, collected some years after Buddha's death.

§ Oldenberg, *Buddha.*

"Who gives food and drink with generous readiness,
The follower of the Holy One, rich in virtues,
Who, without grudging, gives gifts of the reward of heaven,
Who puts an end to pain, is ever intent on bringing joy,
Obtains the reward of a heavenly life.
She walks the shining commendable path,
Free from pain, she joyfully reaps for a very long period
The reward of good deeds in the happy realm of heaven above."

And of another woman whom he visited and from whom he accepted the gift of a mansion for his Community, he said

"This woman moves in worldly circles and is a favourite of kings and princes; yet is her heart composed and quieted. Young in years, rich, surrounded by pleasures, she is thoughtful and steadfast. This, indeed, is rare in the world. Women, as a rule, are scant in wisdom and deeply immersed in vanity; but she, although living in luxury, has acquired the wisdom of a master, taking delight in piety, and is able to receive the truth in its completeness."

Yet another woman whom he was visiting received praise from Buddha. After a meal offered with her own hands, he said

"A good religious woman who gives food gives four things to the recipients. . . . She gives vital force, she gives beauty, she gives happiness, she gives strength. By giving vital force, she becomes partaker of vital force, human or divine; by giving beauty, she becomes partaker of beauty; by giving happiness, of happiness; by giving strength, of strength, both human and divine."*

Buddha was the first to affirm that true enlightenment, i.e. the knowledge of the highest path leading to saintship, was not confined to Brahmans, but was open to all the members of all the castes.† This

* Copleston, *Buddhism: Primitive and Present.*
† Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, Chapter IV.

would logically include women, but he did not at first see that he should admit women to his order. Most of his disciples had a decided antipathy to his doing so, and it was some time after the mendicant monks were instituted that he could be persuaded to found a corresponding order of nuns. This is said to have been due to the solicitations of his foster-mother and his wife. With reluctance he consented, but he could not refute the argument that women, being eligible for Arahatship and Nirvana, could not be refused this means of attaining them. Even then he made rules which subjected* the nuns to the monks, and restricted them far more than their brother mendicants; the nuns, for instance, were to go to the monks to confess and to hear the preaching of the sacred word, though some nuns preached as well. But though women joined in less numbers than men, yet the order of nuns flourished and lived; and the prophecy reputed to Buddha, that in consequence of admitting women to the order, the Law would be forgotten in 500 years,† has not been fulfilled. The words attributed to him are: "Under whatsoever doctrine and discipline women are allowed to go forth from the household life into the homeless state, that religion will not last,"‡ and there is a modicum of truth in them, for no society or religion can flourish without homes, and women are the homemakers. It will be seen that later on nuns were responsible for much in the practice and propagation of Buddhism and for the book in the Buddhist

* E.g. A nun has to bow reverentially before every monk, rise in his presence and duly honour him. No nuns are allowed to live alone, though monks are. In no circumstances is a nun to revile or scold a monk.

† Cullavagga X, 1. Though this remark is quoted in nearly all accounts of Buddha and Buddhism, later scholars do not think that it was in the least likely to have been made by him.

‡ R. W. Frazer's *Indian Thought.*

Canon, before alluded to, called *Therigatha* or *Stanzas by Female Elders*, which contains :

(*a*) The religious experiences of the authors ;
(*b*) Summaries of allusions, metaphors, and striking expressions contained in other books ;
(*c*) A romantic account of the Princess Sunredha, who renounced the world in spite of the remonstrances of her parents and lover.

As a kind of appendage to monks and nuns proper, lay brothers and sisters were admitted, who were called servers, and whose duty it was to minister and provide for those who had given up the world. For this they obtained much merit, and they, unlike the mendicants (monks and nuns), were not bound to chastity and poverty.

Thus, to Buddha, women were a secondary consideration (but that statement does not imply any disrespect or animus on his part), and his regulations and precepts were established mainly for monks. But he said nothing against women, and very few of his followers did. The most famous of these was King Asoka, who lived in the third century B.C. and who issued proclamations to be carved on pillars inculcating peace, mercy and morality. He also sent Buddhist missionaries to various districts ; and his son, Mahinda, was given a special mission to Ceylon. Here a monastery was built, and as some of the king's female relations wished to become nuns, Mahinda sent for his sister, Sanghanitta, who came and preached to many disciples. She and her nuns had brought with them a branch of the sacred Bo-tree which was planted at Anuradhapura and is still growing ; it is perhaps the oldest historical tree in the world (about 2,200 years old !). At the Council of Patma, Asoka

caused the rules of the Buddhist Order to be rehearsed and settled so that "honourable monks and nuns may constantly learn and reflect upon them, and so the laity of either sex." * In one of Asoka's edicts is manifested that tolerance which is so marked a feature of both Hinduism and Buddhism, and which, in the latter case, has extended freely to the status of women. "The beloved of the gods honours all forms of religious faith—there ought to be reverence for one's own faith, and no reviling that of other."

The god who watches over and protects part of the Buddhist world,† Avalokitesvara, "the lord who looks with pity on all men," has a female counterpart in the form of the goddess who is chiefly worshipped in China and Japan—the goddess of mercy. To her shrines women flock, and she is the most popular deity of Northern Buddhists.

> "All the names and all the legends connected with this deity express one and the same circle of ideas . . . that she listens with compassion to the prayers of all who are in any distress of body or mind, especially, however, extending a saving hand to those who are in danger on the sea; that she is now the invisible head and ruler of the present Buddhist Church, appearing now and then in the form of man or woman, to interfere on behalf of the faithful . . . to save souls from hell, to assist in the propagation of Buddhism and so forth."‡

There are also five female energies or *saktis* corresponding to the five human Buddhas,§ and there are shrines in Ceylon dedicated to Pattini, a Buddhist goddess. But Buddhism is not a religion of many

* This can be contrasted with the Hindu Laws of Manu, which forbid women to study the Vedas.

† Buddhists in general do not believe in "God."

‡ E. J. Eitel, *Buddhism: Its Historical, Theoretical and Popular Aspects.*

§ Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, Chapter VIII.

gods even in its corrupted forms, and it is among its famous women of the past and its present-day average women that the feminine qualities Buddhism has educed or emphasised can be noted. The "quality of mercy" is pre-eminently one of womanhood as reflected by the goddess, and it will be seen that the notable women preserved by Buddhist traditions excel in helpfulness. These two characteristics seem the natural ones for Buddhist women, and in present-day Burmah they are not obscured or diverted by the freedom enjoyed by women.

The names of women which have been preserved are almost all of nuns, or lay sisters, or of those who helped them and the monks. Thus there is Khemâ, a nun renowned for her wisdom, of whom a king asks questions and receives answers similar to those which Buddha himself gave later; and there is Upacata, who was tempted of Maro, god of death, change, and decay, to wish for joys in the after life, but who remained steadfast in her desirelessness. Visakha, a rich matron of Kosala, who has been mentioned before, is another type; she gave liberal gifts to monks and nuns, and Buddha with his disciples often dined at her house. Oldenberg* says of her

> "Pictures like this of Visakha, benefactresses of the church, with their inexhaustible religious zeal, and their not less inexhaustible resources of money, are certainly, if anything ever was, drawn from the life of India in those days; they cannot be left out of sight if we desire to get an idea of the actors who made the oldest Buddhist community what it was."

Something of the influence and participation of women in Buddhism can be seen from the drama of India, where Buddhist nuns and priestesses often

* In his *Buddha*.

appear. As an instance there is Bhavabhutis's* play, *Malati and Madhava*; here the heroine, Malati, is brought up by a Buddhist nun; the lovers are married according to Buddhist rites by a priestess, and a holy woman who practised the principles of Yoga and had command over sorcery is addressed thus:

> "Thou hast deserved the praises of the world,
> Whose lofty powers, the harvest of the seed
> By early study sown, are shown by deeds
> That shame the mightiest masters."†

Thus it is clear that Buddhism inculcates:

> "respect for family ties, pious veneration of parents, consideration and esteem for women, who are considered equally with men to be worthy of all religious honours."‡

The propagation of Buddhism in Tibet was chiefly due to two princesses who built temples at Lhassa which contained wonder-working images brought by them from China and Nepal; and it has already been seen that in Ceylon the spread of the Buddhist faith was in some measure the work of women. So individual women have shed their influence over the establishment and spread of Buddhism, while the ordinary women have embraced it with their menfolk and so kept it living. In general the tendency of Buddhism has been non-interference with the position of women; there is no code of Manu, such as in Hinduism, limiting women's activity or knowledge, and no tenets of submission to man such as in the Pauline epistles and the teaching of the Christian Church, as evidenced

* The leading dramatist of India during the second half of the seventh century A.D. As an idealist he has been compared to Schiller.

† The story is given in *The Indian Theatre*, by E. P. Horowitz, and in R. W. Frazer's *Literary History of India*.

‡ J. B. Saint-Hilaire, in *The Buddha and his Religion*.

in the marriage services of the English State Church and in some of the precepts of Roman Catholicism. The result of this is seen in the countries where Buddhism flourishes to-day. In none of these are boy and girl marriages perpetuated as in India, nor do zenanas exist, while veiled women are unknown. Wives and daughters, sisters and sweethearts, mix freely with men.

It is, however, in Burmah, where the religion is purest, that woman's position has had most freedom to settle itself naturally,* and perhaps nowhere in the world is the status of woman as unrestrained as in that country, nor is a higher degree of activity and intelligence attained elsewhere than by Burmese women. Sir George Scott, who has wide experience of the East, said of them †

> "It is certain that the Burmese woman has a freedom and independence which no other women in the East, and very few, if any, in the West, enjoy. She can practically marry whom she pleases; she keeps all her own property, and has an equal share of the profits of all joint property. She has exactly the same right to claim a separation as a man has, and the consequence is there are no unhappy marriages. . . . The women of Burmah are emphatically and without dispute from any quarter, the better half of the race."

The position of women in Burmah is not regulated by religion, which is regarded as an inward culture and as not concerned with the relationship between men and women; and this non-interference has allowed that relation to become more natural, more free, more real, than in most countries. When

* For an understanding account of the Burmese see Fielding Hall's *Soul of a People*, from which much of what follows is taken.

† In a lecture to the Sociological Society.

sacerdotal dogma issues its " Thou shalt nots," human evolution is checked; the prohibitions must come from a deeper source to be of valuable and permanent effect. Marriage in Burmah is not a religious ceremony, but this does not imply that the marriage relation is unsanctified. The Burmese idea of marriage is a partnership of love, affection, comradeship, and when these die all is over. There is no religious bond to hold together two people who would rather be apart, and divorce is free and easy. But this privilege is but seldom used, for the knowledge that separation can be obtained makes each partner more careful in behaviour, more forbearing and enduring, and the fires of love are kept alight longer, since they have to be tended. At marriage the woman does not give up her name or her property; she wears no ring and enters into no bondage, religious, legal, social or moral. There is no inequality in the laws for men and women. " You wouldn't have one law for the man and another for the woman ! " a Burmese man is reported to have exclaimed in astonishment. There have been no bars, religious or any other kind, to the woman from making herself what she liked, and her life what she willed. Therefore she has entered into most spheres as man's equal; about half the trade of Burmah is carried on by the women, who show a remarkable aptitude for it, and seem to have a much keener mercantile instinct than the men. Mrs. Chapman Catt observes

> " It was a most curious experience to discover that the women of Rangoon, the metropolis of Burmah, have had the municipal vote for thirty years; Parsi, Hindoo, Mohammedan, Chinese and Buddhist women are on the electors' rolls and vote. The leader of the women is an ardent and orthodox Buddhist who gives her whole life and fortune to social work. . . ."

With regard to religion itself the following facts in Burmah may be noticed.

(1) The nuns are very few in comparison with the monks; about one in one hundred is the proportion, and in Ceylon it is even smaller. A nun is not held in such consideration as a monk by the women themselves. "We mix our religion with our lives," they say, "with our affections and our worldly doings." The Buddhist monks say: "Women do not understand, they cannot learn. Most women must be born again as men before they can see the light and understand the laws of righteousness." But it is more likely that the women instinctively see the need of work amongst others; and in their course they show a truer conception of the value of religion and of the purpose of life. One disadvantageous result of the scarcity of nuns, however, is neglect of girls' education, for monks and nuns provide the teachers. Thus there are schools for boys in every district, but similar provision for girls is very rare at present except in Rangoon where there are four girls' schools. Doubtless this will be changed in time, now that education has been undertaken by the State.

(2) Judging by the attendance at pagodas, etc., women are more faithful to Buddhism than men;* they carry on the torch of their religion, and have great influence in keeping it alive. This is chiefly due to the greater conservatism natural to womanhood all the world over, and also to the greater instinct in woman to follow some moral ideal that is already present.

As in nearly all religions, most of the original precepts of Buddhism were irrespective of sex, but unlike

* Compare the attendance of women at Christian churches.

some other religions, convention and formulation have not rendered them exclusively masculine. Where Buddhism has had influence in assigning woman's position, it has been indirect influence, and such as to determine her position in the estimation of mankind, rather than in the outward world. The fundamental idea of Buddhism, that desirelessness is the aim, that all desire of any kind is to be suppressed, has led to its attitude towards women; but this attitude is held by the monks only, and the Buddha's answer to those who asked him what conduct he prescribed towards women for those who have left the world amounts to, as has been already seen, "Avoid them."

> "And the Blessed One said: Guard against looking on a woman . . . have no conversation with her. If you must speak with her let it be with a pure heart. . . . The power of lust is great with men, and is to be feared withal. . . . Lust beclouds a man's heart when it is confused with woman's beauty, and the mind is dazed . . . therefore I say restrain the heart, give it no unbridled licence."

But in Buddhism there is no hint of laying the blame on women, and if he could be sure that his desire towards women was dead a monk might see them as much as he liked. The desire is the enemy, not the woman; as the Burmese say, if a person is giddy when looking down a precipice he does not blame the precipice. Man's own nature, which is not necessarily evil, is the cause. And in the recognition of this truth there is more logic and better taste in Buddhist writings than in those Christian ones where the Fathers bitterly rail on women for men's passions.* However, in that Buddhism advocates the suppression of all desires, passions, and wishes, it is

* Notably Augustine, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory Nazianzen, etc.

anti-sexual, and therein depreciates what can become high rapture and inspiring influence to humanity. By belittling sex it belittles man and woman, but more especially and obviously woman. It has been a mistake from the beginning of time, made by some religious souls, that the senses are evil, physical joys are to be shunned, and the instincts of human nature must be crushed. But it is restraint and guidance, and the creation of a noble aim, that are needed rather than foolish prohibition. Want of self-control and the harming of others are wrong; health, mastery, temperance are right.

Yet in spite of Buddhist injunctions and resignations and denials, there is in Burmah no conventional or insincere affectation by women, as is so widespread in the West, that passion is alien to them; their very freedom has allowed their capacity for love to express itself in strength. In fact, one who has lived among them says *

> "Sometimes I think they would be happier if they could love less; if they could take love more quietly, more as a matter of course, as something that has to be gone through, as part of a life's training; not as a thing that swallows up all life and death and eternity in one passion."

And perhaps in this bursting of passion from the bonds of religious precept is seen the truth that a religion, *as such*, is only part of the influence moulding the relations of the sexes, or in settling the status of woman. No one religion as such—Hinduism, Christianity, Islam or Buddhism—elevates or degrades woman. Particular religions have their share of undoubted influence, but geographical conditions, climate, exigencies of daily life, and, above all the

* Fielding Hall, in *The Soul of a People*.

instincts of humanity have also their share. Men and women themselves primarily decide their relative spheres, consciously and unconsciously. That religion is but one factor is seen in the comparative ease with which a case can be made out, by quoting " texts," etc., to show that Buddhism or another religion, has either raised or suppressed womanhood. Not texts and writings, but customs, institutions, legends and poems indicate and determine woman's place ; and these factors are obviously of human origin and development. Human desires and passions, human restraints and mistakes, human weaknesses and failures, human courage and strength, human aspirations and achievements, finally make human character and customs and environment.

CHAPTER VI

MOHAMMEDANISM

Pre-Islamic Allah and his daughters.—Women's position in Arabia before Mohammedanism—female infanticide and polygamy.—Women of the desert free—chivalry, poems.—Mohammed's attitude to women—paradise open to them.—Women's virtues, submission and chastity.—Their position improved.—Marriage and polygamy.—Legal status of wives and legitimacy of children.—Treatment of wives and divorce.—Mohammed not to be judged by modern standards.—Mohammed's wives—Kadijah.—Famous women of Islam in early times; in other lands beyond Arabia; in the Middle Ages.—Woman's position after Mohammed's time: in Persia, in Turkey, etc.—Seclusion of woman and its evil effects.—Present-day women in Islam: The Young Turk movement, Persia, India, Constantinople.—Turkish women's activities.—Bahaism and its influence on women's sphere.—Position of women in Islam will be what they collectively wish it to be.

THE significance of any particular religion cannot be accurately estimated without a knowledge of the conditions from which it was evolved. It is thus of importance to ascertain what were the customs, practices and influences at work, especially with regard to women, when Mohammedanism made its appearance, issued its message, and wrought its effect.

The pre-Islamic religion had comparatively little influence; one supreme god, Allah, was vaguely believed in and worshipped, though, as the Koran says, they "gave him companions." An interesting

light is thrown on the estimation in which womanhood was held when we find that three of these were feminine deities who were worshipped as the daughters of God,* al-Lat, Manet, and al-Uzza ; they were venerated all over Arabia, and their intercessions were graciously accepted by Allah.

But in the Days of Ignorance, as the followers of Mohammed speak of the time before the birth of the Prophet, the chief feature with regard to women, in Arabia and near districts, was the unrestricted polygamy. Among the Arabs woman was a chattel, the integral part of the estate of her husband or father ; yet this polygamy was not what is understood in modern days by the term, but rather the patriarchal system of the Israelites. In Persia there was no recognised law of marriage, and in some of the neighbouring countries the custom of plurality of wives " assumed some of its most frightful aspects."†

The seclusion of women is also a survival of the pre-Islamic period,‡ and therefore not due to Mohammedanism, though that religion did not abolish it, as it abolished other practices. Of these the most terrible was the burying alive of female infants. Perhaps prompted by some savage superstition, and certainly for economic and martial reasons, the cruel custom was indulged in up to the time of Mohammed, who denounced it :

> " Kill not your children for fear of impoverishment : we will provide for them and for you : verily their killing was a great sin."§

Yet the customs mentioned were rather of the town

* See E. A. Freeman's *History and Conquest of the Saracens*, and R. A. Nicholson's *A Literary History of Arabia*.

† *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, by Syed Ameer Ali.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Koran, Chapter XVII.

than the desert, and the generally conceived opinions of Arabs in the Days of Ignorance are based on Mohammed's experience of city life, and not on the ordinary life of the desert. The roaming Bedawee had a vastly different environment, and therefore different needs and institutions. According to some writers,* and by the evidence of legends and ancient poetry, the desert woman was free, and not regarded as a chattel to be possessed, but as a divinity to be worshipped. The courtly respect displayed by heroes of the desert to defenceless maidens was similar to the chivalry of a knight of mediæval Europe.† The harem system was unknown, and the woman of the desert could choose her husband and bind him to have no other wife. She could receive men visitors; and she inspired heroes to deeds of glory. Her praise was what her warrior-husband most valued. Bastardy was an indelible stain, and the bitterest taunt that could be hurled at a clan was to say that the men had no heart to give, and the women no heart to deny.

The legends and poetry of a nation always reflect its life and ideals, and those of early Arabia show in many cases a reverence for women that is not always equalled in modern times. The following incident is related as an instance of ancient chivalry :‡

> " The hero of desert song thought himself happy to die in guarding some women from their pursuers. Wounded to the death, Antarah halted alone in a narrow pass and bade the women pass on to a place of safety. Planting his spear in the ground he supported himself on his horse, so that when the pursuers came up they knew not he was dead, and dared not approach within reach of his dreaded

* Especially Stanley Lane Poole.

† In fact European chivalry was the joint result of Arab culture and Catholic influence.

‡ S. Lane Poole, in his Introduction to *Selections from the Koran*, by E. W. Lane.

arm. At length the horse moved, and the body fell to the ground, and the enemies saw it was but the corpse of the hero that had held the pass. In death as in life, '*sans peur et sans reproche*,' Antarah was true to the chivalry of his race."

The following lines of the poet Muweylik express a tender regard and regret that cannot be associated with polygamy :*

"Take thou thy way by the grave wherein thy dear one lies—
Umm-el-Ala—and lift up thy voice: ah! if she could hear!
How art thou come, for very fearful wast thou, to dwell in a land where not the most valiant goes but with quaking heart.
God's love be thine and his mercy, O thou dear lost one! not meet for thee is the place of shadow and loneliness.
And a little one hast thou left behind—God's ruth on her! she knows not what to bewail thee means, yet weeps for thee,
For she misses those sweet ways of thine which thou hadst with her, and the long night wails, and we strive to hush her to sleep in vain.
When her crying smites in the night upon my sleepless ears, straightway mine eyes brimful are filled from the well of tears."

Another poet sings the praises of a lady :

"She charmed me, veiling bashfully her face,
Keeping with quiet looks an even pace;
Some lost thing seemed to seek her downcast eyes,
Aside she bends not—softly she replies.
Ere dawn she carries forth her meal—a gift
To hungry wives in days of dearth and thrift.
No breath of blame up to her tent is borne,
While many a neighbour's is the house of scorn.
Her husband fears no gossip, fraught with shame,
For pure and holy is Umayma's name.
Joy of his heart, to her he need not say,

* Quoted in Introduction to *The Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.

When evening brings him home—'Where passed the day?'
Slender and full in turn, of perfect height,
A very fay were she, if beauty might
Transform a child of earth into a fairy sprite." *

Some of the old poetry of the desert also shows that female infanticide was not practised there, for the love of a father for his daughter shines through many of the verses, of which two from separate poems follow :

"If no Umeymeh were there, no want would trouble my soul, no labour call me to toil for bread through pitchiest night.
What moves my longing to live is but that well do I know how low the fatherless lies, how hard the kindness of kin.
I quake before loss of wealth lest lacking fall upon her, and leave her shieldless and bare as flesh set forth on a board.
My life she prays for, and I from mere love pray for her death—yea, death, the gentlest and kindest guest to visit a maid.
I fear an uncle's rebuke, a brother's harshness for her; my chiefest end was to spare her heart the grief of a word."†

The next one depicts a father's care for his motherless children :

"Were not my little daughters
Like soft chicks huddling by me,
Through earth and all its waters
To win bread would I roam free.

"Our children among us going,
Our very hearts they be;
The wind upon them blowing
Would banish sleep from me." ‡

Poetry was not confined to men, and the names of

* Translation by Sir Charles Lyall, in *Ancient Arabian Poetry*.
† By Ishaq-ibn-Khalaf, ninth century A.D. Quoted by S. Lane Poole, in the Introduction to *Selections from the Koran*.
‡ Quoted in R. A. Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs*.

many women are noted for their poems: Al-Khansa or Zumadire* won fame for her elegies wherein she bewailed the death of her brothers, and all her poetry is marked by vivid emotion and simplicity of style; the poetess Laila al-Akhyaliyya sang verses that circulated throughout the desert.†

Conditions in the towns were, however, different. The mere fact of less space would mean a certain loss of freedom, and a consequent restriction for women. At Mecca and Medina Mohammed found the practices of burying infant daughters alive, and unlimited plurality of wives, with consequent contempt of women. But the general trend of his teaching was to inculcate respect for women. "Respect women who have borne you,"‡ he says, and "neither let woman laugh other women to scorn."§ "If you hate women," he naïvely exclaims, "it may happen that ye may hate a thing wherein God placed much good,"‖ and no saying has ever placed women higher than "Paradise is at the foot of the mother"¶ (another version is "Paradise may be gained at the foot of the mother"), which is a reported saying of his.

It was natural that Mohammed, in his religious zeal, should regard the special affairs of women as of secondary importance. God, and man's duties were first with him; yet the Koran contains many passages which give guidance respecting the attitude to be adopted towards women, their duties, and character. Some of these passages or sayings are contradictory

* She flourished at the beginning of the seventh century A.D.

† Accounts of these, the two chief poetesses of pre-Islamic times, can be found in C. Huart's *History of Arabic Literature*.

‡ Koran, Chapter IV.

§ Koran, Chapter XLIX.

‖ Koran, Chapter IV.

¶ *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, by Syed Ameer Ali.

and represent different moods of the prophet, but all are revered by Mohammedans. "The world and all things in it are valuable," he said at one time, "but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman." Yet at another time he exclaimed, "I have not felt any calamity more hurtful to man than woman"; and again, "O assembly of women, give alms, although it be of your gold and silver ornaments; for verily ye are mostly of Hell on the Day of Resurrection."* But the idea that Mohammedans close Paradise to women is an erroneous one, for several passages in the Koran affirm that women will receive the reward of good deeds and that God will make no distinction of the sexes. "Whoso doeth good works, whether he be male or female, and is a true believer, they shall be admitted into paradise and shall not in the least be unjustly dealt with,"† is perhaps the most general assertion, and there, nothing is said of men and women being separated. Again it is written:

"Verily the resigned men and the resigned women,
The believing men and the believing women,
The truthful men and the truthful women,
The devout men and the devout women,
The patient men and the patient women,
The humble men and the humble women,
The charitable men and the charitable women,
The fasting men and the fasting women,
The chaste men and the chaste women,
And the men and women who oft remember God,
For them hath God prepared forgiveness and a mighty recompense."

Here is perfect equality of man and woman! Mohammed is also reported to have said that "Every woman who dieth and her husband is pleased with

* All three sayings are from *The Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.

† Koran, Chapter IV.

her shall enter into Paradise,"* which changes the conditions somewhat. Yet to men the delights of paradise included the provision of beautiful damsels created specially (not the souls of earthly women) for each individual man, whose ravishing black eyes looked only upon him.† These are corresponding to the other sensual delights promised to the elect. ‡ "Those who believe and do that which is right we will bring into gardens watered by rivers, therein shall they remain for ever, and there shall they enjoy wives free from impurity and we will lead them into perpetual shades." § It seems that Mohammed in depicting the joys of Paradise knew the supreme happiness of the sex relationship, and yet did not sufficiently realise that the union must be spiritual as well as physical for complete and lasting happiness to ensue. His ideas with regard to woman in general seem to have been akin to those of the ordinary man, in kind, though not in degree, and this is true of other aspects of his thought: woman's virtues were submission and chastity, which, when extolled by a man, meant submission to himself and chastity until he came. Yet Mohammed defined and improved woman's position. As Carlyle says,‖ "The indulgences which he permitted were not of his appointment; he found them practised, unquestioned from immemorial time in Arabia; what he did was to curtail them, restrict them, not on one, but on many sides."

* *The Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.

† Koran, Chapter LV.

‡ An important consideration in judging the early Mohammedan idea of Paradise, is the social, economic, and especially geographical environment of the people. What was rare in Arabian life would be what was most desired in an after life, e.g. rivers, gardens, trees, fruits and other comforts, as is shown in the extract from the Koran.

§ Koran, Chapter IV.

‖ *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Lecture II.

The practice of indiscriminate polygamy was one of those which Mohammed curtailed and restricted. The number of wives was not to exceed four, "but if ye fear ye cannot act equitably towards so many, marry one only," * was Mohammed's injunction, and in the same chapter he remarks: "Ye can by no means carry yourselves equally between women in all respects though ye study to do it," which some have interpreted as equivalent to saying that a man should marry only one wife, but, considering the number of Mohammed's own wives, this can scarcely be his meaning. However, wives were to be treated kindly, though as inferiors: "The women ought also to behave to their husbands in like manner as their husbands should behave towards them, according to what is just: but the men ought to have a superiority over them";† and again: "The honest women are obedient, careful in the absence of their husbands, for God preserveth them by committing them to the care and protection of men. But those whose perverseness ye shall be apprehensive of, rebuke and remove them into separate compartments and chastise them.‡ But if they be obedient unto you, seek not an occasion of quarrel against them."§ It is not difficult to see that this passage could be the excuse for much cruel treatment of wives, but Mohammed is stated to have remarked: "Admonish your wives with kindness, for women were created out of a crooked rib of Adam, therefore if ye wish to straighten it ye will break it; and if ye let it alone it will be always crooked."‖ Yet though

* Koran, Chapter IV.

† Koran, Chapter II.

‡ Compare the English law which, until the nineteenth century, allowed a man to beat his wife with a stick not thicker than his thumb.

§ Koran, Chapter IV.

‖ *The Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.

he spoke of women in this way the prophet knew their value if they were submissive: "A Muslim cannot obtain (after righteousness) anything better than a well-disposed, beautiful wife: such a wife as, when ordered by her husband to do anything, obeyeth; and if her husband look at her, is happy . . ." ;* after which it is not surprising to hear him remark that "verily the best of women are those who are content with little."

But in his farewell pilgrimage to Mecca, in speaking to 40,000 pilgrims Mohammed said: "Ye people, ye have rights demandable of your wives, and they have rights demandable of you. Treat your women well," and this is his final summing up of all his precepts about women.

The good treatment of wives should extend beyond the husband's lifetime, for provision should be made for the widows: "Those of you who die and leave wives should leave their wives maintenance for a year." † Unlike the women of Hinduism, Mohammedan women may marry again but they were not to be forced into marriage: "A widow shall not be married until she be consulted nor shall a virgin be married until her consent be asked."‡ Choice was an element in marriage according to Mohammed: "When any of you wishes to demand a woman in marriage, if he can arrange it, let him see her first." § This gives a glimpse of the usual manner of taking a wife.

With regard to divorce Mohammed made rules but discouraged the practice, saying that nothing pleased God more than the emancipation of slaves, and nothing

* *The Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.
† Koran, Chapter IV.
‡ *The Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.
§ *Dictionary of Islam*, under Marriage, by Hughes.

displeased him more than divorce. Before the sixth century the Arab husbands possessed the power of divorce to an unlimited extent, and no rule of humanity or justice restrained them, therefore Mohammed's injunctions were an improvement. He permitted divorced parties three distinct and separate periods wherein they might endeavour to become reconciled. A wife might claim separation on account of ill-usage or want of proper maintenance, but unless she showed good solid grounds for her complaints she lost her marriage settlement. Although the power of divorce was practically unlimited with the man, yet Mohammed advocated generosity towards the divorced wives and some care for the children :

> " When ye divorce your wives, either retain them with generosity or put them away with generosity. But retain them not by constraint, so as to be unjust towards them. . . . When ye divorce your wives and they have waited the prescribed time, hinder them not from marrying husbands when they have agreed among themselves in an honourable way. . . .
>
> " Mothers after they are divorced shall give suck unto their children for full two years to him that desireth the time for giving suck to be completed ; and the father shall be obliged to maintain and clothe them in the meantime according to that which shall be reasonable."*

Mohammed prohibited conditional marriages, and later on, even temporary ones.

Marriage made no difference to a woman's possession of her property, † and she had as full control over it after as before. A daughter was to be provided for as well as a son : " God ordereth you concerning your children : for a male the equal of the portion of

* The Koran.

† Compare this with the condition in England until the passing of the Married Women's Property Act.

two females." * According to one of the best authorities on Mohammedan ideas and customs Mohammed allowed women a footing of perfect equality with men in the exercise of all legal powers and functions.† Thus legality was not a bar to woman, but custom and her own acquiescence gradually established her position. She was not forbidden to worship in the mosques, but she was discouraged from doing so: "Do not prevent your women from coming to the mosque; but their homes are better for them,"‡ said Mohammed, who thought that women's presence might inspire in men a different kind of devotion from that requisite in a place dedicated to the worship of God! The *naïveté* of this view, which totally ignores woman's need for congregating in worship, is somewhat strange to the modern woman, but the view was natural enough then, and is an instance of the basic conception that all things were created or instituted for man, and woman's sphere was to fit herself according to his desires and requirements. If she disturbed his devotions she ought to desist from coming, and carry on her own devotions at home. It is even now the custom for women to go to mosques only on special occasions, when they occupy a gallery reserved for them that they may not draw away men's minds. The same idea is partly responsible for the veiling of women in public, for then men's desires will not be stirred: "And speak unto the believing women that they restrain their eyes, and preserve their modesty, and discover not their ornaments."§ Among the regulations of his domestic life Mohammed

* The Koran, Chapter IV.
† *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, by Syed Ameer Ali.
‡ *Speeches and Table-talk of Mohammed*, by S. Lane Poole.
§ The Koran, Chapter XXIV.

prescribed that all his wives should veil themselves from the gaze of the world and should conceal their ornaments, and be content with whatever share of his society he should give them.* This rule is probably due to the fact that he himself desired Zeinab (whom he afterwards made his wife though she had previously married Zaid, one of his disciples and freedmen), through accidentally seeing her without her veil. As is usual in primitive times woman's position and customs are largely due to the requirements of man's sexual nature; in Eastern and tropical countries this nature is more insistent, and it is only as human evolution advances and is directed by the efforts of both men and women that the sex instinct can be controlled and raised.

It is foolish and futile to judge Mohammed and his followers by twentieth century standards; it is as foolish and futile to endeavour to supply explanations and excuses. It is best to take the matter simply, and consider that plurality of wives was a natural thing to him and his, and that the women assented. This is an important point often overlooked; if the women of the East are waking and rebelling against their lives now,† it does not imply that in the past they felt the same spirit of freedom within them. In the sex sphere, as in every other, the relative position of man and woman depends ultimately on men *and women* themselves. Denunciation, evasion, attempted explanation, all fade before fact; the standard of yesterday is not that of to-day, otherwise this would be a stagnant world.

Mohammed had several wives, though he lived

* *The Saracens*, by A. Gilman.

† See *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*, by Zeyneb Hanoum.

faithfully with his first, Kadijah, who was considerably his senior, for twenty-five years. After her death he married eleven or twelve other women, and Syed Ameer Ali ingeniously endeavours to explain that disinterested motives only induced him to do it. He says *

> "The malevolence of unfair and uncandid enemies has distorted the motives which, under the sanction of the great patriarchs of ancient times, led Mohammed to have a plurality of wives, and so provide helpless or widowed women with subsistence in the lack of all other means. By taking them into the bosom of his family Mohammed provided for them in the only way which the circumstances of the age and the people rendered possible."

This is written all in good faith, and it may have been true of some, but not of all the eleven or twelve. Why not acknowledge that in this sphere Mohammed was like his brethren; though he showed that monogamy was possible by his life of twenty-five years with the wife who was also his first disciple, and whose strength of character must have influenced him considerably in other directions as well as in the sexual one.

> "The first convert was his faithful and loving wife Kadijah, she who fifteen years before had offered her hand in marriage to the poor kinsman that had so successfully traded with her merchandise as a hired agent, with the words, 'I love thee, my cousin, for thy kinship with me, for the respect with which the people regard thee, for thy honesty, for the beauty of thy character, and the truthfulness of thy speech.' She had lifted him out of poverty, and enabled him to live up to the social position to which he was entitled by right of birth; but this was as nothing to the fidelity and loving devotion with which she shared his mental anxieties, and helped him with tenderest sympathy and encouragement in the hour of his despondency. When in an agony of mind, after having seen a

* *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, or *The Spirit of Islam*.

vision, he once fled to her for comfort, she thus revived his downcast spirit: 'Fear not, for joyful tidings dost thou bring. I will henceforth regard thee as the Prophet of our nation. Rejoice, Allah will not suffer thee to fall to shame. Hast thou not been loving to thy kinsfolk, kind to thy neighbours, charitable to the poor, faithful to thy word, and ever a defender of the truth?' Thus up to her death . . . she was always ready with sympathy, consolation and encouragement, whenever he suffered from the persecution of his enemies or was tortured by doubts and misgivings. 'So Kadijah believed,' says the biographer of the Prophet, 'and attested the truth of that which came to him from God. Thus was the Lord minded to lighten the burden of his prophet, for he heard nothing that grieved him touching his rejection by the people, but he had recourse unto her, and she comforted, reassured and supported him.' Truly one of the most beautiful pictures of a perfect wedded life that history gives us."*

As has been said, it is impossible to judge the prophet and his followers by modern standards which advocate monogamy; he must be kept in his own environment and criticised according to his actions there. To his wives Mohammed gave respect, and for them he demanded respect from others, and each of them was honoured with the title of Mother of the Faithful.†

Thus in his regulations with regard to divorce, in most of his aphorisms about women, in his treatment of his own wives, in the limiting of the number of wives allowable, and in his general raising of the ideals of his time, the influence of Mohammed on the position of women was a beneficial one, even though the Koran regards them as beings inferior to man in intelligence and moral worth. "Men shall have the pre-eminence over women because of their superior understanding and strength," and in judicial trials a man's word is worth that of two women even at the

* *The Preaching of Islam*, by T. W. Arnold.
† *The Saracens*, by A. Gilman.

present time. But it cannot be imputed to Mohammed that adherence to the letter of the Koran* and the subjection of Moslem women, is his fault. The spirit of Mohammed was for his own time; to follow the letter of his writings hundreds of years later is to act foolishly and against evolution; and the same idea applies to every religion. The letter is always more limiting than the spirit; the letter continually needs change; yet those who follow the letter view a departure from its precepts with suspicion, if not with horror. Hence arises the eternal need for reformers and iconoclasts in addition to law-makers. The need is present among the Mohammedan women of to-day, who have not yet extricated themselves from ancient usages and institutions for which there is now no necessity.

Mohammedanism was the religion of a fighting people† and therefore woman has been treated by its adherents more as a side issue in life. She was to be there when wanted, but at other times to be out of the way. Yet this is only one aspect of the case, for that Mohammedan women possessed bravery and spirit is shown by the fact that, during the contests between the two cities of Mecca and Medina, it was the women

* Voltaire says "We have imputed to the Koran a great number of foolish things which it never contained. It was chiefly against the Turks, who happened to be Mohammedans, that our priests wrote so many books. They have no great difficulty in ranging our women on their side. They persuade them that Mohammed regarded them as merely intelligent animals, and that by the laws of Islam they were all slaves, having no property in this world nor any share in the Paradise of the next. The falsehood of all this is evident; yet it has all been believed."

† This does not imply that Mohammedans enforced their religion at the point of the sword. "Let there be no compulsion in religion."—Koran. "Islam," says Hallam, "offered its religion, but never enforced it; and the acceptance of that religion conferred co-equal rights with the conquering body. . . ."—Quoted by Syed Ameer Ali.

of each who urged on the men to war.* The women of Medina kindled fury in the warriors by verses and by chanting to the music of timbrels, while those of Mecca inspired their brethren with song.

The history of Islam also contains many instances of noble and notable women, from Fatima, the daughter of the beloved Kadijah, one of the "four perfect women" mentioned by Mohammed, to the modern Kurratul-Ayn, of whom more will be said later. Some of these were connected with Mohammed himself; Ayesha, his wife, personally conducted the insurrectionary movement against Ali, and commanded her own troops at the famous Battle of the Camel; Fatima, his daughter, often took part in the discussions regarding the succession to the caliphate. This celebrated daughter is loved and reverenced by all Mohammed's followers; she is known by such names as the Lady of Paradise, or Our Lady of Light, is the embodiment of all that is pure and true and holy in womanhood, and is called the noblest ideal of human conception. Zaineb, Mohammed's granddaughter, possessed an indomitable spirit. Other famous women were: Zemman, the lion heart, the heroine of many battles, who fought side by side with the bravest knights; Zobeida played a conspicuous part in the history of her age, and by her virtues and accomplishments leaves an honoured name; she was the wife of Haroun al-Raschid, and renowned as a poetess. With her money the great aqueduct at Mecca was constructed and the town of Alexandria rebuilt after its destruction by the Greeks.† Humeida, who was left sole guardian of her son, educated him to become

* *The Saracens*, by A. Gilman.

† See *The Position of Women in Indian Life*, by the Maharani of Baroda and S. M. Mitra.

one of the most distinguished juriconsults of the day; of Sukainah, the granddaughter of Ali, Perron says that she was "*la dame des dames de son temps, la plus belle, la plus gracieuse, la plus brillante de qualités*"; the Sheikha Shulda, designated Fakhrunnissa (the glory of women), lectured publicly at Bagdad on literature, rhetoric, and poetry, in the eleventh century A.D.* Instances of this kind show that the general inferior position of Moslem women is in part due to their own acquiescence, since some rose to a high level. Yet some caliphs attempted to restrict their freedom: Ali Hakem in the tenth century condemned women to more than the ordinary seclusions, and forbade any to appear in the streets on pain of death.†

The influence of Mohammedan women was felt in other countries beyond Arabia, Persia and the adjacent lands. Among the Moors in Spain it is seen that the seclusion of women introduced during the reign of Walid II continued to allow of extraordinary freedom in their lives. Women doctors and operators flourished and women‡ students attended the universities at Cordova, which—

> "was a city of female students, and intellectual leaders of *salons*, as well as a city of poetesses; and fathers were often proud to bear as surname the title of some gifted daughter. . . . A circle of brilliant women, Aixa, Hafsa, Huida 'la jongleux,' all wrote their polished verse. Walladéh, unmarried, and living to a great age, excelled them all with her poetry, her reunions, her patronage of literature and art. . . . Princesses and ladies of rank gave musical soirées, tried their skill in such games as tennis and rackets, and practised archery. . . . After the fall of

* These instances are taken from many given in *The Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, by Syed Ameer Ali, one of the best books to consult on Islam in general.

† He was, however, a monster of cruelty in other ways, and, like Caligula, probably mad.

‡ In the ninth and tenth centuries.

Cordova in the eleventh century there fled to different Mohammedan capitals scholastic women, such as lawyers, expounders of the Koran, musicians and Latin poets."*

And it was the mother of the last Moorish Chief who reproached him as he turned away from Granada for ever. In fact for many ages the Saracens were in advance of the Western Christian nations in astronomy, medicine, logic and most of the useful and ornamental arts, and it is inconceivable that any nation can rise to any such height if its women are in *absolute* subjection or degradation.

One of the "Arabian Nights"† stories tells us of a slave-girl, Tawaddud, who expounds the faith and practice of Mohammedanism; by means of answers to questions she gives information of all sorts in theology, physiology, medicine, astronomy, philosophy, and she displays her skill in chess, draughts and music. The tale is a good indication of the high stage of civilisation reached by the Arabs and their women in the Middle Ages.

Indeed Syed Ameer Ali says, speaking of Moslems in the Middle Ages:‡ "The love of learning was by no means confined to one sex. The culture and education of the women proceeded on lines parallel with that of the men, and women were as keen in the pursuit of literature and as devoted to science as men. They had their own colleges (one well-known institution of this kind was established in Cairo at the beginning of the fourteenth century by the daughter of the Mameluke Sultan Malik Laher). They studied medicine and jurisprudence, lectured on ethics,

* *In the Track of the Moors*, by Sybil Fitzgerald.

† Its date is unknown, but it was composed after the ninth century. The tale is given in *Arabic Authors*, by F. F. Arbuthnot.

‡ In *The Teachings of Mohammed*.

rhetoric and belles-lettres, and participated with the stronger sex in the glories of a splendid civilisation. The wives and daughters of magnates and sovereigns spent their substance in founding colleges and endowing universties, in establishing hospitals for the sick, refuges for the homeless, the orphan and the widow. . . . Many Moslem ladies were distinguished in poetry, thus following the example of the Prophet's daughter Fatima."

Among the saints of Mohammedanism the names of women are found in fair numbers, the oldest and most renowned being that of Rabia-al-Adwiyya, whose tomb became the object of pilgrimages.* She was a mystic, and her sayings are often repeated. Being asked, "Do you love God?" "Yes," she answered. "Do you hate the Devil?" went on her questioner, and she said, "My love of God leaves me no leisure to hate the Devil. I saw the Prophet in a dream. He said, 'O Rabia, do you love me?' I said, 'O Apostle of God, who does not love thee—but love of God hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of any other thing remains in my heart.'"†

The names of two other famous women, though of later times, may be mentioned here: Mihri, a poetess, whose unrequited love evoked many fervid verses of passion and sadness; and who, though wooed by many suitors, died unmarried.‡

She describes herself as being

> "Like rose that droops while yet a bud, 'neath summer's torrid ray,
> By love's fierce flame am I consumed at dawning of my day."

* She died in Jerusalem at the end of the ninth century.
† See R. A. Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs*.
‡ At the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Leyla Hanum* wrote poems on passing events and some translations were published in Vienna periodicals.

Instances have already been given of that work and influence which is supremely woman's, the training of young souls, and they might be multiplied innumerably, but an interesting one occurs in connection with the Javanese, who pray by the tomb of the Mohammedan widow who brought up Raden Paku, one of their great governors. Winwood Reade† pays a tribute to Mohammedan women and speaks of their "grave and decorous aspect." And perhaps it is in this general way that the average women most impressed their characteristics and opinions on the men. William of Rubrouck tells how he found the influence of Moslem wives an obstacle in the way of his proselytising labours; and the captive Moslem women took considerable part in the conversion of the Mongols to Islam. T. W. Arnold says‡ that women appear to have occupied an honoured position among the Mongols and that many instances might be given of their having taken a prominent part in political affairs. Even with seclusion and subjection woman is not necessarily a nonentity. But seclusion and subjection is by no means the general lot of Mohammedan women. In country districts women work in the fields or pass along the roads free and unveiled. Kurdish women do not veil themselves strictly and, "in the domestic circle they are treated as equals by the men who are . . . in the character

* She died in the middle of the nineteenth century. Accounts of each are to be found in *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-lore*, by Lucy M. J. Garnett.

† In *The African Sketch Book*.

‡ In *The Preaching of Islam*.

of husbands most considerate, kind, and forbearing."* Albanian women by their courage and energy have played a considerable part in the history of their country, discussing affairs with their men-folk, and exciting them to resist encroachments.

A certain power was held by women of property, and all daughters were entitled to a share in the inheritance of parents with their brothers. If a woman obtains property after her marriage this cannot be wasted by her husband, and she can act in all matters respecting her property without the intervention of father or husband; she can even sue debtors in open court. On marriage an ante-nuptial settlement by the husband is necessary, and if he fails to make it, the law presumes one. Marriage is a civil act, needing no priest or ceremonial, and the contract gives the husband no power over his wife's goods or property. This gives the woman an advantage in case of divorce, for if she is economically independent she has not the incentive of money to keep her bound. Divorce is far easier for the man than the woman, but she can claim it on one ground. Halil Hafid says †

> "At the time of the arrangement of her marriage a woman can stipulate that she will reserve for herself the right of contesting what is called 'issmat,' which may be rendered as 'decency of conduct.' Thus, when a husband begins to deviate from the path of decency and conducts himself in a fashion detrimental to the honour and peace of his family, his wife, who has the right of 'issmat' in her hands, can appeal to the law, and if the law finds that her life could no longer be tolerable if she remained with him the marriage can be dissolved. It should be remarked that only cultured and well-informed women know how to take advantage of this right."

* See *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-lore*, by Lucy M. J. Garnett.

† In *The Crescent versus the Cross.*

Yet in spite of the facility for divorce possessed by men, divorces do not occur more frequently in Mohammedan countries than they do among Christian people.* This fact may be compared with what happens in Burmah, where divorce can be obtained practically for the asking by one of the partners and yet it is very infrequent. But the Mohammedan need not get rid of one wife before he can take another, and perhaps it is the past prevalency of polygamy that has kept the divorce rate low. No modern thinker with high standards wishes to uphold polygamy among Mohammedans or any other peoples, but the practice can be explained, and in some respects it compares favourably with the more hypocritical customs of Western Europe and America. At least polygamy is open; there is no lip-service to monogamy, and secret use of prostitution, and early marriage prevents much prostitution.† Polygamy does not imply sexual immorality in its worst forms, and even General Gordon, who cannot be accused of laxity, said "I like the Mussulman: he is not ashamed of his God: his life is a fairly pure one." Sir W. Muir sees this aspect of the matter and his opinion is thus expressed ‡:

> "The Corân not only denounces any illicit laxity between the sexes in severest terms, but exposes the transgressor to condign punishment. For this reason, and because the conditions of what is licit are so accommodating and wide, a certain negative virtue (it can hardly be called continence or chastity) pervades Mohammedan society in contrast with which the gross and systematic immorality in certain parts of every European community may be regarded by the Christian with shame and confusion. In a purely

* *Ibid.*

† Mohammed said: "All young men who have arrived at the age of puberty should marry, for marriage prevents sin."—Hughes. *Dictionary of Islam.*

‡ In *The Coran.*

Mohammedan country, however low may be the general level of moral feeling, the still lower depths of fallen humanity are comparatively unknown."

A modified form of polygamy, the four wives allowed by Mohammed, has actually been of service in checking the advance of prostitution, and therefore a lesser evil has prevented the greater, for the position of a third or fourth wife is better than that of a prostitute, though of course that of an only wife is the best, and if the husband is faithful to her that is the ideal mating. Another justification for polygamy in the past is the consideration of the children, which, in a polygamous nation, are legitimate and, with their mother, have certain rights. The whole question of sexual morality, all over the world, needs facing and reforming and uplifting; and it must be done by women together with men in mutual understanding. It is being done: and Mohammedans who keep to the letter of four wives are decreasing, for the spirit seems to be developing towards real monogamy, but this will only become a reality (and probably the standard of the future) when Mohammedan women have developed farther, and the men realise it. Among Indian Mohammedans, at present about 95 per cent are apparently monogamous either by conviction or necessity, and among educated classes the custom of polygamy is regarded with distaste and disapprobation. In Persia only a small fraction (it is estimated about 2 per cent.)* have more than one wife. A student† of Turkish life and the woman movement in Turkey experienced great difficulty in finding a Turk with more than one wife, although such still exist, in small numbers. A Turkish woman‡ says

* According to Col. Macgregor, and quoted by Syed Ameer Ali.
† Grace Ellison, in *An Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem.*
‡ Zeyneb Hanoum, in *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions.*

"The people of the West still think of us . . . . as one amongst many wives. Yet polygamy . . . . has almost ceased to exist in Turkey."

A Mohammedan who has written on his own religion declares*

"For my own part I look upon polygamy in the present day as an adulterous connection, and as contrary to the *spirit* of Islam, an opinion which is shared by a large number of Mussulmans. . . . It is earnestly to be hoped that before long a general synod of Moslem doctors will authoritatively declare that polygamy, like slavery, is abhorrent to the laws of Islam."

Here are important statements, which show that in this region of life among the followers of Islam a development has come, and the old conditions will gradually die away. It is not true that Mohammed's reform, in limiting the number of wives to four, "must always stand in the way of a more complete reform,"† for thinking human beings will refuse to be bound by the words of a teacher, however great, when the spirit of evolution moves beyond those words. Even the law is gradually coming to the point of recognising only one wife, for a new law in Turkey provides that "at the time of contracting the marriage the wife can lay down the condition that in case the husband should wish to form another marriage, the first or second marriage, as the case may be, will *ipso facto* be annulled."‡

Syed Ameer Ali also thinks that the general position of woman in Mohammedan countries is not so low as is often thought. He considers that—

"Taken as a whole, her status is not more unfavourable than that of many European women, whilst in many

* Syed Ameer Ali, in *The Teachings of Mohammed.*
† E. A. Freeman, *History and Conquest of the Saracens.*
‡ *Manchester Guardian,* February 7th, 1918.

respects she occupies a decidedly better position. Her comparatively backward condition is a result of want of culture among the community generally, rather than of any special feature in the laws of the fathers."*

In this as in many other passages the author of *The Spirit of Islam* indicates the fact that it is a deeper and more basic foundation than religion which determines the position of women. He is, however, not satisfied with the existing conditions. He says :

" The custom of seclusion creates infinite disorders and renders the first education of children pernicious. The usage itself does not depend on any religious prescription, it is simply a convenience. Ancient Kings of Persia observed it as a sign of grandeur, and the Moslem sovereigns and chiefs imitated their example and adopted the custom. Among the Arabs the women of the tribes are perfectly free and move about as they wish. The ladies of Mohammed's family conversed with the disciples, received their visits and assisted in the repasts of the men."

Another progressive Mohammedan, Mr. M. S. Mohidin, a magistrate of Madras, who wishes to break down the *purdah*, offered in 1911 a prize of one thousand rupees to anyone who could prove from the Koran or the traditions of the prophet that the seclusion of women is authorised ; he also brought the matter before the Universal Races Congress of 1911 and spoke of the miseries of the *purdah* system resulting in ignorance through want of education, and lung disease through want of fresh air. He declared :

" We boast of having given to women, according to the Koran, the highest place compared with other nations, but of what use is this privilege if their very existence is to be that of birds in gilded cages ? We imprison half our

* It is of interest to note that at the conclusion of a lecture on " The Gospel of Islam," presided over by Mr. Syed Ameer Ali, at Caxton Hall in June, 1914, a woman of the audience said that she embraced Islam " completely and finally." See *The Morning Post* for June 9th, 1914.

number—to our own cost. We are single-handed in competition with others in the onward march of progress."

Yet in spite of these enlightened views there are still educated and travelled Mohammedan men who acquiesce in the continued seclusion and inferior position of women, and who say that they "do not intend to ignore the fact that the book of Islam asserts the supremacy of man, which has incontestably been bestowed upon him by nature."* But those who assert that "nature" has bestowed anything "incontestably," at this stage of evolution, and especially in connection with *human* nature, are but attempting to stop a stream with a stick. A recent instance of this comes from Cairo. It was reported† that—

> "*Al Kibla*, the semi-official organ of the Hedjaz Government, dealing with the feminist movement in Egypt, expresses indignation at the publication of a portrait of Mme. Zaghloul, in which she is unveiled and is seated among European and Egyptian men. *Al Kibla* also criticises Mustapha Kemal for allowing his wife to accompany him on a military parade on horseback unveiled. The paper concludes by warning Mohammedans not to violate the Sheria Law, which orders Moslem women not to show themselves unveiled except to their husbands."

In some respects, especially in Morocco, womanhood is depreciated more than in the times of the Koran, for there a youth is provided, until he marries, with a female black slave by his parents.‡ Negress slaves

* Halil Hafid, in *The Crescent versus the Cross*. He is thinking of Chapter IV: "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God had gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them," which is a curious blending of the supernatural and the economic!

† On June 7th, 1923, in *The Morning Post*.

‡ *With Mulay Hafid at Fez*, by Lawrence Harris. Compare with this practice the saying in the Koran, Chapter XXIV: "And compel not your maidservants to prostitute themselves if they be willing to live chastely, but whoever shall compel them thereto, verily God will be gracious and merciful unto such woman after their compulsion."

however, go unveiled, and if ill-treated they can fly to a sanctuary and claim to be resold, and if a negress bears a child to her master she can gain her freedom. Circassian girl slaves are sometimes purchased by Turkish parents for their sons in order to avoid the great expense of a legal marriage ; such a union would also ensure more submission from the wife. But it has been said* that "the lot of the slave girl in Turkey is in many respects preferable to that of the domestic servant in the West."

But women themselves are stirring in Mohammedan countries. In the Young Turk movement the part played by women was no inconsiderable one, though a reaction came later ; but when Turkish women can write as follows the reaction cannot last long :

> "Let us band together and slowly but surely insist on having better, freer and more healthy conditions. Let us put aside these artificial restrictions which make us ridiculous ; let us come forward openly, bravely to take part in the great march of civilisation ; let us break the barriers of our prison life and dare to be free—free to act, think and develop. . . . Let us be pioneers, cost what it may, of a new era for our fettered countrywomen."

The Turkish lady, who lectured unveiled before a European audience at an American college, aroused an outburst of indignation among orthodox Moslems, but she opened a door through which others may pass.

In Persia as well, the open influence of women is having effect. Mr. W. Morgan Shuster, who knows the interior life of Persia perhaps better than any other alien, says

> "You would be surprised at the great part women are playing in Persia. It is mainly due to their efforts in the last five years that the Persians have been able to shift

* By Lucy M. J. Garnett, in *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-lore*.

from their backs the burden of an absolute monarchy 500 years old. There is one woman's society there which seems all-powerful, the faces of whose president and officers I have never seen, because of the veils their religion compels them to wear in public. It is marvellous to think how great has been the progress of the Persian women, in spite of the life which the Mohammedan religion imposes upon her."

It was in the Persian *Mejliss* or Parliament that *The Times** notes an occurrence which registers the advancement of Persia's women. Hadji Vakil el Rooy, deputy for Hamadam, astonished the House by an impassioned defence of women's rights, during the discussion of the bill dealing with the next election. He received no support, and the *Mujtehid*, a cleric, is reported to have said that the doctrine that women had souls or rights would mean the downfall of Islam. But the idea had been mooted, and doubtless bore fruit.

In India a significant figure is that of the Begam of Bhopal, a Mohammedan State where the eldest child of the ruler, whether girl or boy, succeeds. Her grandmother, Nawab Sikandar Begam,† "holds the same place in the history of Bhopal that the Emperor Akbar holds in the history of India . . . as a great reformer she will go down to posterity in the pages of history." One of her most earnest injunctions to the granddaughter who was to succeed her was

"The cultivators of the soil are our wealth; that we are able to rule and to live in state and luxury, is owing to the labour and industry of these poor people. When you become ruler of the State, look upon the fostering of this humble but useful class as your first and highest duty."

In her autobiography‡ the granddaughter shows the

* Of August 9th, 1911.
† She died in 1869.
‡ See *An Account of My Life*, by the Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam.

fine use she has made of her own power for the progress of her State, while remaining in the orthodox Mohammedan faith.

The Ottoman Government has conceded admission to women to the University of Constantinople, where special courses of lectures on hygiene, domestic economy, pedagogy, science, etc., are arranged for them. This step is certain to react throughout Mohammedan countries on the status of women, as will the fact that among seven Indian women who obtained the B.A. degree at Calcutta University* was a Moslem girl. The number of Mohammedan girls in Bengal schools is also increasing. Some upper class women are quite emancipated, and the progress has proceeded rapidly during the past few years :

> " Indirectly the proclamation of the Constitution has meant much to the Turkish woman. After that date she was allowed to travel and see for herself the lands about which she had read so much. Then it was that with her observant eyes and receptive mind she understood our lives as no Western woman has been able to understand the East, and the result is that to-day, although to the tourist she appears as veiled and secluded as ever, yet she has advanced so rapidly that I, after an absence of five years, scarcely know her. . . . It is time Europe saw the Turkish woman as she is ; saw her splendidly organised Red Crescent Society, her woman's paper edited by a woman, her programme for the national health, for the training of nurses and doctors."†

The newspaper is a weekly one, devoted to the interests of women, and to the rendering of them more capable and self-supporting. In India also the paper *Khatun* is conducted by Mohammedan women in Lucknow.‡

When progress occurs rapidly and self-consciously,

* In July, 1915.
† *An Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem.* by Grace Ellison.
‡ See *India* for October 20th, 1916.

the danger always exists that it may be imposed from without instead of developing from within ; that is, it may become mere imitation instead of growth. This danger may be less in Turkey if a Turkish woman's evidence of her own countrywomen is true :

> " But now that I have seen the women of most countries, you may want to know which I most admire. Well, I will tell you frankly, the Turkish woman. . . . It is not because I am a Turkish woman myself, but because, in spite of the slavery of their existence, Turkish women have managed to keep their minds free from prejudice. With them it is not what people think they ought to think, but what they think themselves. Nowhere else in Europe have I found women with such courage in thinking. . . .
>
> " In the development of modern Turkey, the Turkish woman has already played a great part, and she has a great part still to play in the creation of a new civilisation ; but present experience has shown that no servile imitation of the West will redeem Turkey from the evils of centuries of patriarchal servitude."*

Since his marriage to an emancipated Turkish heiress Mustapha Kemal Pasha has often spoken publicly in favour of giving women a more dignified social position, saying that one of the main causes of Turkey's backwardness had been the abstention of women from co-operating in the development of the country. Some extracts from his speeches † are the following :

> " Our women ought to be the equals of men in education and activity. From the earliest times of Islam there have been women savants, authors, and orators, as well as women who, unaided, opened schools and delivered lectures. The Moslem religion even orders women to educate themselves to the same standard as men. In the recent war the Turkish women replaced the absent men in all kinds of work at home, and even undertook the transport of munitions

* *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*, by Zeyneb Hanoum.

† Delivered in the early part of 1923 at Constantinople and Broussa.

and supplies for the Army. It was done in response to a true sociological principle—namely, that women should collaborate with men in making society better and stronger. . . . Turkey's intellectual condition to-day is inadequate to make good our backwardness, unless we develop a higher standard of education. It is the mothers who are able to effect this. Our independence, nationality, sovereignty, and all noble things depend on the wise education of our women."

Perhaps a few words concerning Babism, or its later form of Bahaism, may not be out of place here, since it was the son of a Mohammedan who focused the movement that has been called by Gobineau "the latest expression of an eclectic evolution growing out of the innate pantheism of the Iranian mind." According to some Moslem authorities the ideas are held by an Eastern socialistic communion, but probably "socialistic" is used in a sense different from the European, as Bahaism has no definite economic proposals such as Socialism advocates. The moral and social reform preached, and the denouncement of the hypocrisy of the ordinary Mullahs, were enthusiastically endorsed by a woman of Kazwin, the daughter of a Mohammedan clergyman. Her memory is now venerated under the name of Qurrut-ul-Ayn* (Light of our Eyes), but she fell a victim to the persecution of the Bâbis which was undertaken partly on account of the fanaticism of the clergy and partly owing to political expediency. This woman represents the new spirit of Persian women, a spirit which may impregnate the Mohammedan ideal, or may cause many to break away into the new faith of Bahaism. Here concubinage is interdicted, and divorce forbidden; women are allowed unveiled in public, and equality between the sexes is preached. Abdul Baha,

* Sometimes spelt Kurratul Ayn.

the foremost exponent, the Master, of the creed has often spoken in Europe and America on woman's position and exhorted his followers to endeavour to raise it.*

Finally, in Mohammedanism, as in every other religion and department of life, the position of women and their influence will be what they, collectively, wish it to be. Individual women here and there will see more clearly the tendencies exhibited by womanhood, and read the significances of their times; and they will show the direction in which all are travelling. They may make mistakes, they may be disbelieved, they may pay the price of pioneering, but in time and gradually the reality will approach the ideal pictured by womanhood as a whole, for nothing can withstand the human spirit in its progress.

* For an account of Bahaism see S. Sprague's *Story of the Bahai Movement* and *A Year with the Bahais in India and Burma.*

CHAPTER VII

JUDAISM

Opinion that womanhood degraded in Judaism erroneous.—Woman the queen of the home.—Women in the Old Testament—famous types.—The Mosaic law—daughters property of fathers, mothers honoured equally with father, plurality of wives.—Advantages of polygamy; prostitution; childless wives.—Quotations in praise of women.—Judaism and women in the Middle Ages.—The Talmud and sayings of the Rabbis.—Attitude to woman and her mission.—Marriage broker, wedding contracts, divorce laws, polygamy forbidden.—Women and learning—difficulties to be overcome.—Learned women from the second to eighteenth century.—Woman's place and duties in the synagogue—separated from men in worship and amusements.—Shakespeare and Scott in depicting Jewesses.—Modern times—Jewish women's congress—broader emancipation needed—what is good in the old religion should be united to new ideas.

THE general opinion among non-Jewish peoples concerning the status of womanhood among the Jews is an erroneous one, for the idea obtains that women are more than usually degraded among that race. The habit of judging a nation's ideals, or even customs, by scrutinising its laws and exceptional cases (the only ones that receive record) does not give an accurate picture of the time; the same method could show a correspondingly low position among the women belonging to practically any religion. The evidence provided by statutes and priests indicates a condition lower than the average in all departments of life, including that of womanhood; for statutes are

made for the worst classes, while exhortations are given for the purpose of raising habits, and are couched in terms that also describe the worst characteristics. It is from indirect means, by studying customs, attitude of thought, legends and poems, that a picture may be imagined with more likelihood of truthfulness.

As is often the case in early times, the women of Judaism enjoyed a large measure of freedom before their society was conventionalised and the Law was formulated ;* and there was no general resistance on their part when restrictions were placed upon their actions, and stigmas (to the modern view) on their capabilities. But even with all her disabilities the Jewish woman was always queen within the home. Rabbi Eliezer says that " the King's daughter *within the palace* is all glorious but not *outside.*"† With the Jews the separate spheres of the sexes were greatly different, and the qualities ascribed to each sex were not alike, but complementary ; in this they had seized upon a truth, but they distorted it in that they made the spheres and qualities mutually exclusive. Woman, however, was honoured in what was regarded her place, a place with which she acquiesced ; but she met with prohibitions elsewhere ; and this will be found the case throughout the course of Jewish history. Thus woman cannot be said to have been degraded, but to have been assigned, usually with her own will, to a separate sphere from man. Freedom at first ; then accepted relegation to the home ; and, later, attempts at recognised freedom once more, is the history of Jewish womanhood. Allowing for variations according to geographical, economic and religious

* Compare the free woman of the desert in early Arab times and also her sister of the early Teutonic tribes.

† S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism.*

conditions, such, speaking quite generally and broadly, is the history of the greater part of womanhood throughout the world. The longer and more deeply the question is studied, the more it is recognised that, in societies which have any claim to civilisation, fundamental human nature is everywhere akin.

Judaism recognised to some extent the feminine element in its God in the personification of Wisdom* as his daughter :

> " Wisdom shall praise herself
> And shall glory in the midst of her people . . .
> I came forth from the mouth of the Most High . . .
> Come unto me ye that are desirous of me
> And be ye filled of my produce."†

Though the Jewish Yahweh is not usually considered as extolling the feminine ideal, yet in this instance the conception could not have been made and accepted had womanhood been despised.

If the position of women in Old Testament times be examined it is found to be high in some respects and low in others. Whether all the incidents reported be accepted or not, makes little difference to the picture of society presented. With regard to the mere legal status and outward freedom of action of women, their advantages were few, but as a moulding force of character and home their scope was great. By law she was classed with house, servants and cattle ; in reality she could, like Deborah, become a judge in Israel, unto whose voice her people hearkened. This great woman was also a prophet and poet as well as a statesman ; she ruled the land for forty years, " and there was peace in the land." As a " mother in

* Compare the Sophia of the Gnostics.
† Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 3, 10, 19.

Israel" she devoted her life to the welfare of her nation.

The father's power over his daughters was practically unlimited; he could sell them into bondage,* with the object of their becoming the wives of their masters or of his sons, but the daughters must be under the age of puberty, and the course was only excused by extreme poverty. A daughter's hand, however, could always be disposed of by her father: "I gave my daughter to this man."† Yet Rebekah was asked: "Wilt thou go with this man?" so the custom appears to have considered the daughter's wishes in some cases, though in others,‡ the extent of the father's authority, and his callousness, could not be greater. Power of life and death also seems to have been in the father's hands during patriarchal times, as is illustrated by the story of Jephthah's daughter,§ but this was later on condemned when it took the form of sacrifices to Moloch. A further sign that the daughter was regarded as her father's property is shown in the fact that, if any man injured her, compensation was to be paid to the father.‖ The father's possession of his daughters sometimes extended beyond their marriage, as when the father of Samson's wife gave her to his companion,¶ and Saul gave Michal, David's wife, to Palti,** and Laban was acknowledged by Jacob to have authority over his married daughters, Leah and Rachel. These, however, are probably exceptional cases, as are those

* Exodus xxi. 7.
† Deuteronomy xxii. 16.
‡ As recorded in Genesis xix. 8, and Judges xix. 24.
§ Judges xi. 34–9.
‖ See Exodus xxii. 16, Deuteronomy xxii. 19 and 28.
¶ Judges xv. 2.
** Samuel xxv. 44.

of cruelty; and the natural affection between father and daughter, and his pride in her, is revealed in the exclamation of the psalmist:

> "When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth;
> And our daughters as corner-stones hewn after the fashion of a palace."*

The Mosaic law gave inheritance to the daughters when there were no sons, and to the sisters or aunts when there were no brothers, but in no case to the mother. The position of a daughter or sister, therefore, was in this instance no worse than that of daughters in England at present with regard to landed estates. The episode of the daughters of Zelophehad is a vivid one, depicting the directness of action pursued by them:

> "Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad. . . . And they stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation at the door of the tent of meeting, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not among the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord . . . and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from among his family because he had no son? Give unto us a possession among the brethren of our father."†

This resulted in the law of inheritance for daughters, as recounted in the verses which follow. A curious light on the comparative estimate of boys and girls is given by the law saying that a woman shall be purified thirty-three days after the birth of a son, but sixty-six after that of a daughter,‡ and the necessity of making a *sin*-offering after a natural

* Psalms cxliv. 12.
† Numbers xxvii. 1–5.
‡ Leviticus xii.

event is a sign that maternity was not regarded as intrinsically sacred.

The mother under the Mosaic law* held, however, a comparatively high position when compared with some other nations of antiquity. According to the fifth commandment the mother is to be honoured equally with the father, and in the moral law the mother, as well as the father, was to be "feared" (i.e. respected).† The punishment for him who struck or cursed his mother was death.‡ This equality of respect is not discernible among the early Greeks, for Telemachus treats his mother in a manner that does not indicate the "fear" mentioned in Leviticus. The Book of Proverbs contains expressions of reverence for mothers; the son is urged to forsake not the law of his mother, nor to despise her when she is old; King Lemuel was taught wisdom by his mother,§ and the last chapter paints a picture of the worthy wife and mother, whose children "rise up and call her blessed." "A foolish man despiseth his mother,"‖ and throughout, the same respect is inculcated for the mother as for the father, and her teaching is regarded as of equal value. The symbol of love and protection is a mother, e.g. "Rachel weeping for her children,"¶ and "as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."** Thus, though in legal matters, and with regard to ritual, the mother was inferior to the father, yet in home life and in the training of children†† she was his equal, if not sometimes his superior.

* Numbers xxvii. 1–5.
† Leviticus xix. 3.
‡ *Jewish Encyclopædia*, under "Mother."
§ Proverbs xxxi.
‖ Proverbs xv. 20.
¶ Jeremiah xxxi. 15.
** Isaiah lxvi. 13.
†† Deuteronomy xxi. 18, 19.

Hannah disposes of her son's life without asking Elkanah's permission, and his only remark is that she should do what seemeth to her good.* Over the affairs that a woman would have in her hands, only the weakest of women would be incompetent to rule. Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel could scarcely be cited as instances of the subjection of women; Abraham, indeed, is once commanded to obey Sarah,† and in personal matters, as distinct from set rules, an individual strong character would then, as always, create and follow its own standard. The social life of a people is directed far more by the unwritten laws of general sentiment than by the written ones of priest or statesman, though the latter have their force.

As among the Mohammedans, plurality of wives was a prevalent practice, and there seems to have been no limit to the number of wives and concubines allowed, except the ability to maintain them and their children. This resulted in only kings, chiefs and wealthy men having very many wives; the patriarchs possessed but a few, and it is doubtful whether Isaac had more than one. The same may be said about Noah, Job, Hosea and Isaiah, for had it been the custom for men of such types to have many wives, their stories would have indicated the fact. As was shown in the chapter on Mohammedanism, however, it must not be concluded that polygamy was a wholly bad custom. It had its advantage in that it lessened that worse condition of prostitution which is so rife in our modern civilisation, and to an honest mind, not afraid of facing facts, the system of open polygamy is preferable to that of hidden prostitution. The

* 1 Samuel i. 22, 23.

† ". . . In all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice. . . ."—Genesis xxi. 12.

sacred prostitution* of the temples and groves also contained nobler elements than that of the present day.† The custom was probably derived from the cult of Ashtoreth,‡ whose worship had a prominent place among the Phœnicians, and whose service included temple prostitution.§ As part of a religion, the custom was more worthy than the sordidness of present-day usage.

The childless wife was not happy, and therefore she sometimes voluntarily gave one of her maids to her husband; Sarah, Rachel and Leah each do this. The fate of Hagar indicates that the lot of the slave-wife was frequently unhappy. Moses and the prophets discouraged the multiplying of wives, and laws were designed to protect the interests of the less-loved wives,‖ or of women captured in war,¶ or of slave-wives.** The picture of the Shunammite woman's home obviously is one of a monogamic marriage,†† and the various references to husband and wives in the Psalms‡‡ and Proverbs§§ would lose their point if taken as implying a plurality of wives. Therefore we may assume that one wife for one husband was the ideal in Old Testament society, as it was in Roman times among the Jews. In the Epistle to Timothy‖‖ it is

* Professor T. K. Cheyne says, in *The Two Religions of Israel* (page 237): "It is unnecessary at this time to explain either verse 13 or 14 [of Hosea iv.] but on the usage of sacred prostitution." In Hebrew a temple prostitute was called a "sacred woman." See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, under "Harlot."

† See the remarks on this aspect in the chapter on Hinduism.

‡ The Babylonian *Istar*, and Greek *Astarte*.

§ See the article under "Ashtoreth," in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

‖ Deuteronomy xxi. 15–17.

¶ Deuteronomy xxi. 10–15.

** Exodus xxi. 7–10.

†† 2 Kings iv.

‡‡ Psalms cxxviii.

§§ Proverbs xxxi. 10–31.

‖‖ 1 Timothy iii. 2.

said that a bishop should be "the husband of one wife," which implies that some men were not.

The Hebrew term for husband—*baal*—means "owner" or "master," and for wife—*beulah*—means "owned,"* and therefore the wife was considered, in a sense, the property of the husband, and it is true that a wife does essentially give herself to her husband, so the terms are not ones denoting a subjection that is forced. And the Jewish woman was not isolated as were Mohammedan wives, for she possessed considerable freedom, while her influence in the home was supreme. Chastity and obedience seem the chief duties of the wife, and an ordeal was provided if the husband became suspicious of his wife.†

From *Ecclesiasticus* verses may be gleaned which adequately prove that the value of a worthy wife was fully recognised and appreciated:

"In three things was I beautified . . .
The concord of brethren and the friendship of neighbours
And the woman and her husband that walk together in agreement."‡

"Happy is he that dwelleth with a wife of understanding."§

"Happy is the husband of a good wife,
And the number of his days shall be twofold.
A brave woman rejoiceth her husband."‖

"As the sun when it ariseth in the highest places of the Lord,
So is the beauty of a good wife in the ordering of a man's house."¶

Such verses as these; the many famous women of early Judaism, such as Deborah, Huldah, Miriam,

* *Jewish Encyclopædia*, from which much information has been obtained.

† See Numbers v. 11–31.

‡ Ecclesiasticus xxv. 1.

§ Ecclesiasticus xxv. 8.

‖ Ecclesiasticus xxvi. 1–3.

¶ Ecclesiasticus xxvi. 16.

Sarah, etc.; and the high honour paid to woman as head of the household, indicate no mean position of women in general. At least one verse of the Old Testament has implied, through mistranslation, a contempt for women. The prophet Isaiah is supposed to describe Israel at a very low level when "Children are their oppressors and women rule over them,"* but this passage reads in the Greek Septuagint: "Exactors glean them, and extortioners rule over them," which is a truer version of the Hebrew.

The Jews of the Middle Ages, and earlier, depended mainly for their sanctions on the Talmud,† which contains the explanations and illustrations that the teachers of the law were in the habit of giving in their lessons. Its contents are miscellaneous and include detailed directions as to conduct as well as the loftiest expression of religious feeling, and many references to women are made. Such quotations as

"Not money but character is the best dowry for a wife. . . ."

"A man's happiness is all of his wife's creation. . . ."

"When his wife dies, a man's world is darkened, his step is slow, his mind is heavy. . . ."

"A man must not make a woman weep, for God counts her tears. . . ."

"God's presence dwells in a pure and loving home," and "marriages are made in heaven" indicate that woman was neither scorned nor disregarded. Although in the Middle Ages any betrayal of pre-nuptial love

* Isaiah iii. 12.

† The meaning of the term is "Teaching," and it consists of tradition which has been transmitted orally for centuries, and has been finally cast into a definite literary form.

by a woman was repulsive to the Jewish conception of womanliness,* yet the Talmud says

> " A man must not betroth his daughter while she is a minor ; he must wait until she attains her majority and says, ' I love this man.' "

To our modern eyes the various maxims and precepts about women current in the Middle Ages are curiously contradictory, in whatever religion they are found.† In the Jewish prayer book occurs the synagogue benediction :

> " Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast not made me a heathen, who hast not made me a slave, who hast not made me a woman."‡

Yet on the other hand the master of the house chanted, on the Sabbath eve, extracts from the last chapter of Proverbs in praise of woman :

> " A virtuous woman who can find ?
> For her price is far above rubies.
> The heart of her husband trusteth in her.
>
> " And he shall have no lack of gain.
> She doeth his good and not evil
> All the days of her life.
>
> " She openeth her mouth with wisdom ;
> And the law of kindness is on her tongue.
> She looketh well to the ways of her household,
> And eateth not the bread of idleness.
> Her children rise up and call her blessed ;
> Her husband also, and he praiseth her, saying :
> ' Many daughters have done virtuously,
> But thou excellest them all.' "

In the home she had unchallenged dignity. It is

* Isaac Abrahams, in *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages.*

† Compare the Laws of Manu and the Koran, as well as early Christian writings.

‡ The woman's praise corresponding to this was : " I thank God that I was made according to His will."

the distinction of Judaism that its daughters were *companions* to their husbands; their "chief duty was to train their children well, to keep a Kosher house and to practise the bestowal of kindnesses,"* and they were honoured for the performance of this duty. The dying injunction of the Rabbi Judah-ha-Nasi to his sons was: "Be careful of the honour due to thy mother." With such conceptions home life was the centre of all that was good in Judaism; "the Jewish home life was everywhere serene and lovely, for if Judaism had virtue at all it displayed it in the home."† Therefore the influence of woman was perhaps greater among the followers of Judaism than elsewhere during the disturbed centuries of mediæval times.

No writer of the period gives higher praise to wifehood than does the Rabbi Gershon of Mayence:

> "He who is without a wife is without joy, without blessing, without happiness, without learning, without protection, without peace; indeed he is no man."

Nowhere in Jewish literature do there exist passages commending lifelong celibacy for men or women. The ideal, at bottom insulting to womanhood, of the Roman Catholic priest or of those who make "themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake,"‡ does not appear in the Jewish consciousness. The duty of every Israelite was to marry as early as possible,§ and so fulfil his destiny, for, says Ketuboth:‖

> "Thy wife hath been given to thee in order that thou mayest realise with her life's great plan."

In Old Testament times one driving force towards

* *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogues*, by Oesterley.
† *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, by Isaac Abrahams.
‡ Matthew xix. 12.
§ Genesis i. 28.
‖ Quoted in *Judaism as Creed and Life*, by Morris Joseph.

early marriage was the necessity for *numbers* in order to establish their power. But many Rabbis also enjoined early marriage, and said that those who were unmarried after the age of twenty were cursed by God; frequently men were compelled to marry by a court of justice. Only in rare instances was a man allowed to remain celibate all his life; in Jerusalem, for instance, no man over twenty and under sixty was allowed to reside without a wife.* But the excuse that time was desired in order to study the Torah or Law would usually be accepted as sufficient cause for delay. Women were exempted from the duty of marriage, but in order to avoid suspicion they were advised not to remain single, and some Rabbis applied the term "Destroyers of the World" to the women who took the vows of celibacy. Wedded life was regarded by the generality of Rabbis as the most natural and exalted state.†

The motive for urging early marriage was a moral one, as chastity was a pronounced Jewish ideal,‡ and early marriage greatly lessened recourse to prostitution. This is an aspect of the subject that has to be considered, especially with Oriental races in whom the instinct of sex is more pronounced and insistent.

The Rabbis were emphatic in their exhortations regarding the treatment of wives, and fidelity was expected from the husband as well as the wife. He was to love her, honour her, and be true to her; though there was seldom love before marriage, yet there was seldom unfaithfulness after. A Jew who

* Isaac Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages.*

† With this idea may be contrasted that of the Buddhists that it is the highest state to have eliminated desire.

‡ The early marriages of India can be compared.

physically ill-treated his wife was regarded as a monstrosity ; one Rabbi proudly says, " This is not done in Israel." A wife-beater was not unknown, but if brought to justice he would be fined as severely as possible. The Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, living in the thirteenth century, declared that Jews were not addicted to the prevalent habit of ill-treating wives. Rabbi Asheri* says " Be not cruel or discourteous to your wife ; if you thrust her from you with your left hand, draw her back to you with your right hand." To parallel this, a fourteenth-century Jewish testament says, " My daughters must respect their husbands exceedingly, and they must be always amiable to them ; husbands must honour their wives more than themselves."

In quite early times† it was the custom for Jewish girls to dance and sing in the vineyards for public courtship. Some sang the following :

> " Young man, lift up thine eyes to see whom thou art about to choose. Fix not thine eyes on beauty, but rather look to the piety of the bride's family. Gracefulness is deceit, and beauty is a vain thing, but the woman who fears the Lord, she is worthy of praise."

Others, the more beautiful, are credited with singing

> " See how fair we are.
> Choose your bride for beauty."

But by the Middle Ages the method of originating a courtship was through a third person, the Shadchan, or marriage broker, who was often an enthusiast for marriage ; among Jews this office was usually undertaken by a man.‡ His duty was to bring the families

* Died 1327.
† See Judges xxi. 21.
‡ In eastern countries it was chiefly a woman who arranged marriages.

together and to see that the marriage treaties were satisfactory. A large proportion of the marriages contracted were between very young couples, so that the bridegroom was unable to set up a house of his own, and therefore he resided in the house of the bride's father,* or was maintained by him. A betrothal contract of the thirteenth century† is couched in the following terms:

> "The father gives his daughter Teuna in marriage, promising a dowry of 10 marks at the time of the nuptials and 5 marks a year later. He will provide both weekday and Sunday apparel, and give them ample board and lodging. He will support them an entire year in his house, furnish them with all they require, clothe them and shoe them and discharge their talliage if any be imposed on them during the aforesaid year. He will likewise engage a teacher to instruct the husband during the said year."

The Ketubah was the wife's wedding contract drawn up to protect her from penury in the days when she could be divorced against her will, often for a caprice of her husband. By the Ketubah she was provided with a sum of money which was to be paid to her if she was divorced. Various other agreements were arranged in this contract, one of which was a promise by the man to support their daughters until marriage.‡ There is no promise of obedience on the wife's part in the marriage service, but in the Ketubah the man says

> "Be my wife in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel and I will work for thee, honour, support and maintain thee."

* Compare the custom in India, where the bride goes to live with the bridegroom's mother.

† Belonging to a Norwich Jew and dated 1249.

‡ If he died leaving an estate the sons inherit it and the daughters are maintained by it, but if the estate is small the daughters inherit it and the sons must earn their livings. Decreed by Judge Admon of Jerusalem, A.D. 40.

In rabbinical writings the word for the act of marriage is *kiddushin* (literally "sanctification"), and the explanation given of the term is, "He thus prohibits her to the whole world as a sacred object." During the wedding ceremony the bridegroom hands to the bride his mantle, girdle and hat, to signify she shares his property; and places her hand on the upper post of the house, thus making her mistress of the house.

Although the husband might, until the eleventh century, divorce his wife at will,* yet shame for the man as well as the woman was attached to the procedure, and most rabbinical writings discourage it.

"He who divorces his wife is hated before the Lord."

"God's altar sheds tears for him who divorces the wife of his youth."

If the husband divorced the wife, the daughters remained with the mother unless a court decided she was not a proper person for the charge. And in the Talmud it is written that if a man's divorced wife fall into need he should remember that she had been his flesh, and must stretch out his hand to succour her. Early marriages were often responsible for the prevalence of divorce, but when the separation took place before the marriage was consummated there was no stigma attached to either side. Rabbis did not prohibit divorce, but they made it difficult through red tape, and by compelling the husband to pay the divorced wife the sum mentioned in her Ketubah. But in the eleventh century the absolute right of the husband was formally abolished by the Rabbi Gershon† of Mayence, in these words:

* She might remarry, but if she became a widow or was again divorced the first husband might not remarry her.

† He lived 960–1028.

"To assimilate the right of the woman to the right of the man, it is decreed that even as the man does not put away his wife even of his own free will, so shall the woman not be put away except by her own consent."

However, where either of the parties shows good cause for a divorce the marriage could be dissolved against the will of the guilty party. Henceforward the wife was not completely at the mercy of her husband, and she could demand a divorce for various causes.*

Rabbi Gershon also prohibited polygamy on pain of excommunication. This practice was sometimes adopted with the wife's consent instead of divorce, in order that the husband might fulfil his religious duty of begetting. Therefore if his wife remained childless for ten years her consent to his having another wife could be asked, and, if she refused, some Rabbis maintained that the law of monogamy might be broken. Though polygamy was allowed, yet monogamy was practised generally in the Middle Ages; the Talmud is based on a monogamous custom, and none of the Rabbis quoted therein were bigamists. The Jews of Spain practised bigamy to some extent as late as the fourteenth century, though it was necessary in every case to obtain the assent of the king; but by the twelfth century the following oath was included in the marriage contracts of many countries:

"The said bridegroom hereby promises that he will not marry a second wife during the lifetime of the said bride except with her consent, and if he transgresses this oath and marries a second wife during her lifetime and without

* They were: Refusal of conjugal rights; impotence; loathesome disease, leprosy or malodorous business; cruel treatment and deprivations of her lawful liberty of person; wife beating; apostasy of husband; and licentiousness of husband.

her consent, he shall give her every tittle of what is written in the marriage settlements together with all the voluntary additions herein detailed, paying all to her up to the last farthing, and he shall free her by regular divorce instantly and with fitting solemnity."

The rather absurd statement was made by Jad Hachasakah that

"A man may marry many wives, even a hundred, either at once or one after another, and his wife cannot prevent it provided that he is able to give to each suitable food, clothing, and marriage duty."

But it is foolish to judge by the isolated opinion of a stray writer when the general practice was so different.

The Jewish woman who elected to enter other spheres than that of wife and mother, especially that of learning, found the way beset with hindrances and difficulties. Girls were sometimes taught to read in mediæval times, but it was considered highly improper to instruct them in the Law.* The Rabbi Eliezer thought it "inadvisable on moral grounds to permit it," and the same man, when a scholarly woman asked him a question, replied, "A woman's scholarship should be confined to the spinning-wheel.†" The Rabbi Ben Azzai, however, was opposed to Rabbi Eliezer, for he considered it was every father's duty to teach his daughter the Law.

Other opinions similar in tone to the first were enunciated by various Rabbis :‡

* Compare the Hindu Laws of Manu, which forbade women to study the Vedas, and Henry VIII's command that no woman was to read the chained Bible in churches unless a man were by to explain it to her.

† With this may be noted Luther's dictum that no gown worse becomes a woman than learning.

‡ These are quoted by the Rev. A. McCaul in his *Sketches of Judaism and the Jews*, with the object of showing that Judaism has degraded womanhood.

"Women and slaves are exempt from the study of the law."

"A woman who learns the law has a reward, but it is not equal to the reward which the man has because she is not commanded to do so."

"The majority of women have not got a mind fitted for study, but pervert the words of the law on account of the poverty of their intellect."

"A woman is unfit to give legal evidence as she appears in the following catalogue: Women, slaves, children, idiots, the deaf, the blind, the wicked, the despised, relations and those interested."

These ideas were expressed in opposition to the original intention of the use of the Law, for the first time Ezra read it he did so in presence of both men and women.* But it is impossible to form a true conception of the position occupied by women in Judaism from such prejudiced sayings as the above, which are reminiscent of the outpourings of rabid anti-suffragists in the first decade of the twentieth century, that so unnecessarily disturbed the upholders of women's rights. Besides, there were other opinions, as, for instance, that of the Rabbi Chisda, who said

"God hath endowed woman with a greater portion of intelligence than man, and therefore she obtains her maturity at an earlier period than man does."

A Jewish mother instructed her children until their fifth year, and when they attended school her presence in the school was always welcomed.† As the mother seldom knew Hebrew, portions of the rituals were translated for her benefit and that of her children, and thus it was through Hebrew women that translations into various tongues were commenced. So

* Nehemiah viii. 3.

† A custom which would be good for both mothers and schools in the present day.

important was the influence of a home considered that no unmarried man or woman was allowed to undertake the duties of a teacher.*

Several mediæval Rabbis who thought it wrong to teach women did not forbid them to obtain knowledge on their own initiative, and this was done in many cases. Thus Paula dei Mansi, wife of Jechiel, obtained much Talmudic knowledge, and, in a day when writing was an art little known and practised, she copied commentaries on the Bible.† There were many Jewish women who lectured on the Scriptures and kindred subjects: Dulcie, daughter of Eliezer of Worms, gave public discourses on the Sabbath ;‡ and Miriam Schapira, the ancestress of the Loria family, gave lectures, but behind a curtain ! Similarly Rabbi Petachio tells of the daughter of Samuel ben Ali of Bagdad, who gave instruction to young men from a window. "She herself," he says, "is within the building, whilst the disciples are below outside, and do not see her." Bath Halleri, the daughter of a Rabbi, is reported to have given 1,200 public biblical lectures from behind a screen. In earlier times, Bellet, the daughter of Menachem, who was living in Orleans in A.D. 1050, taught the women of her town in the lore of the Talmud. A queen is mentioned in the Talmud itself for having done much for Judaism —Helena of Adiabene (152 B.C.), and the famous Queen Salome a little later was noted for her wisdom and energy. In the midst of disasters she exhibited

* Again a custom that has much to recommend it ; a few married women on the staffs of girls' schools in the present day would tend to humanise the atmosphere and prevent a certain narrow outlook. The rule is quoted from *The School System of the Talmud*, by B. Spiers.

† Graetz, *History of the Jews*.

‡ She was martyred in the early thirteenth century by two Knights of the Cross.

diplomacy and power, and her ambition was to preserve her people in Pharisaic worship.

To return to the Middle Ages. A number of Jewesses in South Germany were noted for their learning in the early fifteenth century, and entered into discussions with Rabbis. The opinions of these "Lady Rabbinists" were cited with approval. And in the revival of Jewish culture in the eighteenth century, women, as leaders of *salons*, were pre-eminent in their influence. So in spite of prohibitions, perhaps in some instances because of them, those Jewish women whose thirst for learning was strong enough, were able to break through the conventions and drink of the fountain which should be free to all. But not all men forbade learning to women; in England John Evelyn speaks in his Diary* of an acquaintance of his, "A Burgundian Jew who had married an Apostate Kentish woman. . . . He showed me several books of their devotion, which he had translated into English for the instruction of his wife." Thus whether for the sake of truer companionship, as in the case cited by Evelyn, or for the sake of teaching the children, or for the sake of satisfying women's own desire for learning, the fountain would inevitably become unsealed to a certain extent. The list of names might be extended, but they are in themselves of little consequence; the fact that a considerable number of women are recorded as having achieved high attainments in learning, is sufficient to show that, though it may have been difficult, the pursuit of knowledge was not impossible for womanhood. In another connection, the name of Benvenida Abravanel must not be forgotten, for she

* 1541.

it was who succeeded in deterring Charles V from banishing the Jews from Naples in the sixteenth century.

However, in the synagogue as well as in the realms of learning, women were accorded a subordinate place. The segregation of the sexes in synagogues began about the thirteenth century, but it is considered not impossible that men and women may have prayed together in Talmudic times.* The reasons for the exclusion of women from the main auditorium of the synagogue seem to be the Biblical precedent that women were not to enter the sanctuary, and an idea similar to the Moslem one, that the presence of women would distract the attention of the men from their devotions. It may be that the latter reason was the originating cause of the former prohibition. As late as 1697 the Jewesses of Metz were forbidden to appear in the synagogue unveiled. The women sat, not in galleries as is now the custom, but at the back, screened by curtains, or at the side in their own rooms. Here, at their own prayer meetings, the women were led by precentors of their own sex. The epitaph exists of one Urania of Worms, who died in the thirteenth century :

> " This headstone commemorates the eminent and excellent Lady Urania . . . she, with sweet tunefulness, officiated before the female worshippers to whom she sang the hymnal portions. . . . In devout service her memory shall be preserved."

The Vorsagerin was the woman reader who read the prayers and translated them into the vernacular. In Poland and Russia every synagogue has such a reader,† and they have not been unknown in London

* *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, by Isaac Abrahams.
† *Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, by W. O. E. Oesterley.

A series of prayers known as Supplications, which form additional prayers to the ordinary liturgy, were chiefly composed by women and deal with their needs on various occasions. In one of these collections in the British Museum a special prayer is added for servant maids and one for their mistresses. But women were excluded from performing any important service in the Temple. At home, however, it was the woman's privilege to usher in the approach of the Sabbath by lighting the ceremonial lamp, and in some instances women or girls kindled the tapers or lamps that were burned at the Channukkah, or Feast of Dedication observed to celebrate the victories of Judas Maccabæus over the Syrians.* The position of Jewish women in religious worship was, however, no lower than that in any other religion, and even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when perhaps the exclusion of women from public worship was most vigorous, it was not uncommon to use a woman's embroidered cloak or apron as covering for sacred objects in the synagogue, such as the scroll of the Law. Some feminists might look upon this as but another instance of man making use of woman without rewarding her, but in reality it was an honour offered to the sex and—an important consideration in judging such customs—the women so regarded it.

As they were separated in the synagogue so were the sexes kept apart in their amusements. "Men and women shall neither rejoice nor mourn together," was the Jewish saying, and even young children played only with their own sex. Dancing was a favourite pastime, for asceticism was alien to the Jewish nature, but women danced with women and

* *Jewish Ceremonial Institutions and Customs*, by William Rosenau.

men with men, with the exceptions that a husband might dance with his wife, a father with his daughter, a mother with her son, and a brother with his sister. The objections were not, as in the case of the Puritans, to the dancing, but to the proximity of the sexes. In the later Middle Ages, however, a tendency for mixed dancing shows itself. Even betrothed couples were not allowed to consort together to any great extent, and they were not permitted to embrace or kiss one another's lips. If they were very young, and this was often the case, the man sometimes swore he would not see his future wife until the wedding day. At Amsterdam the Rabbis of the eighteenth century attempted to prevent betrothed girls from appearing in public with their heads uncovered. Married women always covered their hair; they might be liable to a divorce otherwise. A Jew might not pray in the presence of a woman whose hair was visible, but it is difficult to conceive of the reason, unless a woman's hair, which was her glory, might be looked upon as a source of temptation or desire to the man. A story is told which illustrates the seriousness with which kissing is regarded. A Jew, Reuben, allowed Simeon's wife to describe herself temporarily as his spouse in order to pass the frontier as she had no passport, and Reuben's was made out for himself and his wife, who had not accompanied him. The frontier official was suspicious of the relationship, and said: "If she is your wife, then kiss her." Reuben and the woman refused, and the deception was detected.

Yet, in spite of disadvantages and limitations, the Jewish woman of the Middle Ages was respected, and one thirteenth century writer says: "Nowadays . . .

all Jewesses are women of surpassing merit." There is therefore an element of absurdity in declaring that

> "In life she ranks with slaves and children. Death is held up to her as an object of terror . . . and after death her utmost hope is that the wanderings of her soul may not be protracted."*

A truer picture is drawn by Shakespeare in "Jessica" and by Marlowe in "Abigail"; Scott's "Rebecca" also indicates that Jewesses were, in stories and theatres which are reflections of life, lauded and beautiful. That they suffered with their men-folk in the cruel persecutions of the Middle Ages cannot be doubted. This would become another bond to draw the sexes together; but that their religion or the other sex specially endeavoured to degrade them is false, though there still exist ceremonies and customs which detract from their dignity. But this is true of other religions and other men.

With modern times has come a greater intermingling of the Jewish race with others, and the influences working on all women, in Europe and America especially, have also played their part in the moulding of the daughters of Judaism, their ideals and characteristics. So that the strivings and standpoints of Jewish women in particular are similar to those of the modern woman in general. One significant indication that the women of Judaism are not behind their sisters in progress is the Jewish Women's Congress held at Chicago in September, 1893, when papers on such subjects as The Women of Biblical Times; Jewish Women of Modern Days; and Women in the Synagogue, were read and dis-

* Rev. A. McCaul, in *Sketches of Judaism and the Jews.*

cussed. From one paper * can be culled the names of many women who typify the Jewish feminine spirit. Sara Copia Sullam lived in the eighteenth century; she was learned in poetry and philosophy and was the writer of a treatise on the immortality of the soul, the vigorous style of which is praised by Graetz; † Dorothea Mendelssohn, Henrietta Herz, Rachel Varnhagen‡ were renowned for their brilliancy and general culture, and their *salons* were among the most crowded; Fanny Mendelssohn, the sister of Felix, was the composer of many of the "Songs Without Words" attributed to her brother, but her father's narrow conception of what was fitting for her sex prevented her acknowledgment of them; Rachel Felix and Sara Bernhardt are famous as actresses, Grace Aguilar as an author and Emma Lazarus as a poet who translated Heine, and wrote a series of poems "By the Waters of Babylon"; Betty, the widow of James Rothschild, was a patroness of learning,§ and Judith, the wife of Sir Moses Montefiore, a philanthropist; Lina Morgenstein defended and helped Froebel's system of education, showed great devotion to the sick and wounded in the Franco-German War, besides being an author and translator.

According to Hilaire Belloc, Charles Kingsley derived his literary ability, and General Booth of the Salvation Army his organising capacity, from their Jewish mothers.‖

Another aspect of the modern Jewish woman's

* By Helen Kahn Weil.

† Author of the *History of the Jews*.

‡ A biography of Rahel Varnhagen has been written by the Swedish feminist, Ellen Key, who considers her Germany's greatest woman.

§ In 1849 she offered a prize to the girl showing the greatest proficiency in Hebrew-French translation.

‖ See *The Jews*, by Hilaire Belloc.

spirit is shown in an extract from a second paper,* which recognises the qualities needed to fulfil the aspirations of womanhood.

> "The Jewish woman needs to be more noble, more self-sacrificing, more alive to the ideal, if she would be worthy of those who have preceded her. Let her study the history of the past, if she would comprehend the present. Let her counteract all narrowness. . . . The mother is still the most potent factor in the world; let her live up to the high standard set her by the Jewish women of the past. . . . There is positive need for women to keep in touch with the political history of our own country, and of all contemporary movements; the politics of to-day form the history of to-morrow."

To the admonitions regarding the past must be added one regarding the future—it is not well to cling to past customs too rigidly. Respect is due to them, but when their purpose if fulfilled, the better way is to carve new habits to fit new conditions.

So much of the Jewish ceremonials and observances are practised in the home that the woman received her place with more definiteness and authority than has been the case with her Christian sister; and the home has been very essentially her sphere. It is still regarded by some as almost her only one, as they say that men and women have each—

> ". . . a distinct place to fill in God's scheme of life. Each has something to offer to the common stock of happiness that the other lacks. . . . If man is the king, woman is the power behind the throne."†

That the Jewish woman should lose her sway in the realm of home is undesirable, but that she should extend it into wider fields is the hope of all her well-wishers. With other women of the present day she

* By Henrietta G. Frank.

† *Judaism as Creed and Life*, by Morris Joseph.

is entering new spheres,* and she has her aspect of womanhood to express there.

A few years ago an interesting event, indicating the tendency of the time, occurred in the Orthodox Jewish Church: at the Cambridge Synagogue† a woman,‡ for the first time in the history of the Church, addressed a Hebrew congregation. This was the more significant as the body allowing the innovation is composed of the orthodox and conservative rather than the modernised and liberal Jews. Of significance also is the fact that one of the writers who sympathetically depicts the Jews of the present, their habits of thought, their lives and conventions, is also a strong advocate of the broad emancipation of women.§

The Council of Jewish Women, formed at the Congress at Chicago in 1893, convened another World Congress of Jewish women at Vienna,|| the reports and proceedings of which indicate the social spheres in which Jewish women will be most influential. The report of the meetings runs:¶

> "Since April a unit of three women, under the direction of the Committee on European Reconstruction, has had its labours centred in the port cities of Central and Western Europe, which attract a large number of prospective emigrants and refugees, especially from Russia and the Ukraine, where the terrible pogroms occurred. European Councils have been established at Rotterdam, The Hague, Antwerp, Geneva, Paris, and Lodz (Poland). The Council has also co-operated with the Joint Distribution Committee in the work for pogrom and war orphans from Eastern Europe.

* The share of the Jewess in Industrial Work is shown in *The Jews of To-day*, by Arthur Kuppin.
† On December 5th, 1919. Reported by *The Times*.
‡ Mrs. R. N. Salomon.
§ Israel Zangwill.
|| In May, 1923.
¶ In the *Morning Post*.

"A world of information was given on the problems of Jewish emigration, the care of children, the white slave traffic, and the pioneer work and prospects of settlers in Palestine. The conclusion was general that the white slave traffic could be fought successfully only by international agreements, the severe measures in England and the good work of the League of Nations receiving full recognition.

"It was an international gathering, and speeches were made and papers read in English, German, French, Hebrew, and Yiddish. Of the Vienna Jewish Women Workers the very energetic Frau Anitta Müller-Cohen, an excellent organiser who has saved the lives of many Austro-Jewish children and done capital work on behalf of orphans from Eastern Europe, deserves high praise."

The sentiment of the community is more powerful than law, and whatever spheres the Jewish woman desires to enter, whatever influence she wishes to exert, is hers to accomplish in time. The twentieth century sees the dawn of an era when the religions of the past will be respected, but not slavishly adhered to, when sects and races will be merged into the human race and a human religion. Such questions as morality or woman's position cannot be finally determined by one religion or one race; the problems need all races and all creeds. There is a kinship in humanity that makes all questions finally world-wide. Those whose influence counts in the world are those who press forward, not despising, but using, the past. Survivals in conventions, customs, and laws linger, and the future will unite what is good of the old to the new. And the Jewish woman, scattered throughout the world, will participate in the ever-present renewal.

CHAPTER VIII

ANCIENT GREECE

Greek sculptures deny that woman degraded in Greece.—The early Minoan Age in Crete—court of Knossos, frescoes and vases.—Women free and unveiled participating in all doings—Homeric times—women of upper classes had much freedom—monogamy established custom.—Qualities of Homeric women—Nausicaa, Andromache, Helen, Penelope, Calypso, etc.—Immortals in Homer.—Goddesses of the Greeks and their characteristics—symbolic of earthly women—Athena, Artemis, Hera.—The Muses.—Hesiod and his goddesses—his remarks on women.—Women worshippers and priestesses, the Thesmophoria, Eleusinian mysteries.—Amazons—the Olympic games.—The Lyric Age—poets on women—Sappho and her genius—other women poets.—The drama—women in the theatre.—Æschylus and Clytemnestra.—Sophocles and Antigone.—The women of Euripides, interpreter of his age—his fine types—their strength and courage—Alcestis and others.—Aristophanes—many plays dealing with women's questions—Lysistrata.—Athenian women of the upper class secluded and suppressed.—The Hetairæ, their position and influence.—Aspasia, her efforts to free women.—Other hetairæ.—Plato's opinion of the quality of men and women—his women pupils.—Aristotle's balanced view.—The Panathenæa and woman's share in its preparation and procession.—Festivals.—Education of girls at Athens and Sparta.—The writings of Plutarch—pictures of wedded happiness.

IT is generally taken for granted that in ancient Greece women were particularly subjected to restrictions and low estimate; and though in some respects this view is true, yet in others evidences are existent that honour and admiration accrued to

woman, in a greater or less degree, from the earliest civilisation, throughout the Homeric period, and in the age of Pericles, as well as during later times. A visit to the British Museum will emphasise this conception, for it is impossible to regard those grand figures of goddesses and Amazons, with their poise and serenity, without also recognising that here were the Greek women of old, idealised certainly, but containing the salient features of their models. Sculpture and vase-paintings interpret history as well as do writings and laws ; Keats said it in three lines :*

> " Thou foster-child of Silence, and slow Time,
> Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
> A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme."

Another consideration must be kept in mind, and that an important one often overlooked : Greek civilisation was based on slavery, and the consequence of that economic fact permeated the whole of their society, including the actions and lives of the free women. Many slaves were women, and their position must be taken into account, as also that of the twentieth century working-class woman, in order to arrive at a just interpretation and criticism of woman's sphere and influence. Not until those who form the industrial basis (on which the life of the world rests) are duly honoured and protected will any society have the claim to true civilisation. Ancient Greece, with its great achievements, lacked the modern conception of the importance of labour, as did the European theology of the Middle Ages ; hence in ancient Greece two classes of women at least, whose position widely differed, must be considered. Many writers† com-

* In his *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*
† For example, J. P. Mahaffy.

pare Greek social life with that of to-day, but there are two problems ever present now which scarcely stirred the minds of the olden Greeks: the Labour problem and the Woman problem. It is more philosophical to consider each age relatively to the conditions obtaining at the time; in this way only can be appreciated its achievements in manners, religion, and knowledge. Woman's sphere and influence is also best judged relatively, and only thus can they be justly appraised.

That women possessed a freedom and power in the older civilisation of Greece which has been unsuspected for centuries is proved by the archæological knowledge gained during the last eight or nine decades. The early Minoan Age * can speak through the excavations in Crete, and relate something of the life during its period; the court of Knossos can be reflected with all its glory and freedom and joy.† In the fragments of paintings women are depicted as often as men; and ladies, in dress that appears very modern, are seen sitting at the windows of the palace, openly and unveiled. On a painted sarcophagus can be seen richly dressed women walking in a procession, a woman driving a two-horsed chariot, and another woman holding the cords of a bull about to be sacrificed.‡ A fresco in the temple at Knossos shows a woman placed on a high seat near the sacred horns, and there seems to be a preponderance of female figures in representations of religious functions, while the images are almost exclusively feminine; so it may be concluded that in the Minoan Age woman had

* About 3000 B.C.

† H. R. Hall, in *The Ancient History of the Near East*, eloquently describes life in the Knossian palace.

‡ R. M. Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete*. Many illustrations are also to be found in *The Palaces of Crete and their Builders*, by Angelo Mosso.

an important and influential position in religion, and privileges in the religious rites. She appears to have been the mediator between man and the unseen powers. In the family also she was of consequence, for sons took their mother's name, and descent was in the female line. This does not imply what some sociologists have taken it to mean—matriarchy or mother rule—but merely the fact that inheritance depended on the mother, and her importance was thereby increased. Mother, Child and Initiated Youths formed the factors of the old social group, for the primitive forms of society were *matrilinear*, and woman was the social centre, though not the dominant force.*

It has been said that

> "Probably in Minoan Crete women played a greater part than they did even in Egypt, and it may eventually appear that religious matters, perhaps even the government of the State itself as well, were largely controlled by women. It is certain they must have lived on a footing of greater equality with the men than in any other ancient civilisation, and we see in the frescoes of Knossos conclusive indications of an open and easy association of men and women. . . ."†

Clay figures of snake-goddesses or priestesses show the elaborate dress with flounced skirts and the high ornate hat of the women. In frescoes it is seen that they dress their hair in coils and side-curls and pinch their waists (men also cultivated small waists); such care over personal appearance is significant and attests an honoured position. On their seals the Minoans made representations of various deities, and a universal worship of a supreme goddess can be discerned; probably it was she who in the later religion of Greece

* Jane E. Harrison's *Themis*. See also the relief of the group of Cybele, the Corybantes, and infant Zeus, in the Museo Capitolino.

† H. R. Hall's *The Ancient History of the Near East*, Chapter II.

developed into the Nature goddess, Rhea, and of Asia Minor into Cybele.

From other archaic vase paintings may be gleaned some idea of woman's position : a sacrifice to Athene is depicted in one* where the foremost figure at the altar, holding up corn for sacrifice, is a woman, who stands in front of the man with a bull ; on another† is an idyll of a woman pouring out wine for a warrior, her rich robe, elaborately dressed hair, and happy expression, together with the gladness exhibited by the man, denotes no servitude on the woman's part.

A red-figured vase‡ in Naples Museum represents a goat sacrifice with Dionysus present, and a priestess sacrifices with woman helpers. Another vase-painting depicts a Delphic omphalos decked with sprays and fillets, and, as an indication of the equality of gods and goddesses, Apollo stands to the right with his staff, and Artemis to the left with a blazing torch.§ Therefore, judging by these traces left by early civilisation, the attitude of women at the time denotes as much freedom as is possessed by men. Also, whatever its origin may have been, the bisexual dress of men priests, which has been in vogue from the earliest ages and is continued to the present day, silently asserts a dignity attached to womanhood.‖

In Homeric times,¶ as depicted in the Iliad and Odyssey, women of the upper class enjoyed considerable freedom, and monogamy was an established custom.

* Represented in Andrew Lang's *The World of Homer*.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Represented in Jane Harrison's *Themis : A Study of the Social Origins of the Greek Religion*.

§ *Ibid.*

‖ It is an interesting fact that the long robe of women adds dignity to men's appearance: witness the Lord Chancellor, the mayor, the judge, the Pope and bishop, etc.

¶ Twelfth to tenth centuries B.C.

" There is nothing better or nobler," says Ulysses to Nausicaa, " than when husband and wife, being of one mind, rule a household."* Although the sanctity of the marriage tie was a serious matter—indeed the Siege of Troy is undertaken on account of its violation —yet infidelity from men was excused in the case of long absences, and the wives did not blame their husbands. Odysseus tells Penelope about Circe and Calypso ; but, on the other hand, Laertes forbears connection with Eurycleia because of his wife's feelings, and no concubine is mentioned with regard to Menelaus during Helen's absence. The relationship between husband and wife is generally one of tenderness, and mutual respect ; nothing could exceed, in beauty and pathos, the scene of parting between Hector and Andromache.† The latter says

> " . . . for me, 'twere better far,
> Of thee bereft, to lie beneath the sod ;
> Nor comfort shall be mine, if thou be lost
> But endless grief. . . .
> . . . Hector, thou to me art all in one,
> Sire, mother, brethren ! thou, my wedded love."

And Hector answers :

> " Think not, dear wife, that by such thoughts as these
> My heart hath ne'er been wrung ; but I should blush
> To face the men and long-robed dames of Troy
> If, like a coward, I should shun the fight.
>
> . . . .
>
> . . . Dearest, wring not thus my heart !
> For, till my day of destiny is come
> No man may take my life ; and when it comes
> Nor brave nor coward can escape that day.
> But go thou home ; and ply thy household cares,
> The loom and distaff, and appoint thy maids
> Their several tasks ; and leave to men of Troy,
> And chief of all to me, the toils of war."

* *Odyssey*, VI 182.
† *Iliad*, Book VI. Lord Derby's translation.

Old Priam asks counsel of his wife Hecuba* and those two must have formed such a pair as Alcinous and Arete.† By the last-named is exhibited the high position of the married woman in royal houses; she went abroad freely, attended banquets, used her intellect and common sense, and allayed the quarrels of men. When Nausicaa explains her identity to Odysseus she says of her mother—

> "And Alkinous took her to wife, and honoured her as no other woman in the world is honoured of all that nowadays keep house under the hand of their lord. Thus she hath, and hath ever had, all worship heartily from her dear children, and from her lord Alkinous, and from all the folk, who look on her as on a goddess and greet her with reverent speech when she goes about the town. Yea, for she too hath no lack of understanding."‡

Her daughter bids Ulysses to kneel to Arete for protection if he wishes to gain a welcome and succour from her husband; she gives a delightful picture of a home scene as she says—

> "When you have got past the gates and through the outer court, go right across the inner court till you come to my mother. You will find her sitting by the fire and spinning her purple wool by firelight. It is a fine sight to see her as she leans back against one of the bearing posts with her maids all ranged behind her. Close to her seat stands that of my father, on which he sits like an immortal god. Never mind him, but go up to my mother, and lay your hands upon her knees if you would get home quickly. If you can gain her over you may hope to see your own country again, no matter how distant it may be."§

Sad Penelope is another type of wife attached to her home, waiting for her husband, and exercising ingenuity in keeping the suitors at bay, She, like

* *Iliad*, Book XXIV.
† In the *Odyssey*, Book VII.
‡ *Odyssey*, Book VI. Butcher and Lang's translation.
§ *Odyssey*, Book VI. Butler's translation.

Clytemnestra, has charge of her lord's realm, and claimants to his chieftainship seek it through her. She also entertained strangers freely.

Homer never implies blame to Helen; Priam and Hector give her affection and pity, regarding her as a victim of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. She is represented as penitent and longing for her home, husband and child; she brings beauty, charm, quiet and grace with her; and although she embodies the cause of all the sufferings in the *Iliad*, no one, except Penelope and the Trojan *women*, reproaches her for the ruin wrought through her. In the Odyssey she is again the respected wife of Menelaus, for the capture and violation of a woman did not, in Homeric ideas, mean ostracism for her if she returned. Such incidents were regarded as misfortunes rather than dishonour, and the women were received back without blame; in addition to Helen this happened to Briseis and Chryseis, women captured in the war. This enslavement of women taken on the capture of any town was general; the noblest were treated in the same way as the meanest, and both Hector and Andromache foresee this fate for her.* Sometimes the captive woman was much loved by her master; thus the central point of the *Iliad* is the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon over the possession of Briseis.

When Ulysses endeavours to persuade Achilles to resume friendship with Agamemnon, he refuses, saying †

> "From me, from me alone of all the Greeks,
> He bore away and keeps my cherished wife
> . . . . . .

* See Hector's speech in Book VI, and Andromache's lament in Book XXIV, of the *Iliad*.

† *Iliad*, Book IX. Lord Derby's translation.

Why hath Atrides brought this mighty host
To Troy, if not in fair-haired Helen's cause ?
Of mortals are there none that love their wives
Save Atreus' sons alone ? or do not all
Of upright hearts and minds well-ordered, love
And cherish each his own ? as her I loved
Even from my soul, though captive of my spear."

Briseis mourns over Patroclus because he had promised to make Achilles wed her, and she gives a pathetic glimpse of the sorrows of women in wartime :

" . . . The lord to whom my sire
And dearest mother gave my life in nuptials, his life's fire
I saw before our city gates extinguished, and his fate
Three of my worthy brothers' lives, in one wound generate.
Tell all in that black day of death."*

The closing scenes of the *Iliad* also illustrate the sorrows of women when Hector's body is recovered from the Greeks ; Andromache his wife, Hecuba his mother, and Helen herself mourn over him ; Cassandra, his sister, had watched for his coming.† There was no seclusion of women here, but all moved freely about the city, until it was taken ; then their fate was wretched. Both Sophocles and Euripides have, in reconstructing incidents of the Trojan War, delineated the horror and sorrow of captive women and their children.‡

Each of the olden epics turns on the motive of marital affection, § and in spite of the warlike nature of the *Iliad* a surprising part is played by women ; in the Odyssey their influence is still more marked. ||

* *Iliad*, Book XIX. Chapman's translation.

† *Iliad*, Book XXIV.

‡ See the woe of Tecmessa in the *Ajax* of Sophocles, and the tragedy throughout Euripides' *Hecuba*.

§ In the *Iliad* that of Menelaus for Helen, and in the *Odyssey* that of Penelope and Ulysses.

|| In fact, so " feminist " in tone is this epic that Samuel Butler has attempted to prove, in his *Authoress of the Odyssey*, that it was written by a woman.

Calypso and Circe seem to be island queens with independent sovereignty, and Nausicaa is an enduring picture of fresh, free girlhood, healthy and strong, unhampered by conventions or affectations. Throughout the epics these qualities of strength and straightforward simplicity are very evident, and denote a womanhood akin to that described in the old Northern sagas. No one could regard Nausicaa as a subject woman, yet her father would be said to choose her husband, as that of Briseis had been chosen; it is doubtful whether paternal affection would cause this to mean much more than does the "giving away" by a father in a modern wedding ceremony. It was exceptional for a bride to bring a dowry to her husband, and at one time it was the custom for the bridegroom to pay a bride price which practically made the marriage into a purchase; and a father's or brother's power would be occasionally abused; but the right of fathers or brothers to sell those under their guardianship, except in the case of unchastity, was abolished by Solon.* Home life is always represented by Homer as happy and harmonious, and it has been truly said that "no literature in the world displays a happier domestic life or one more gentle, true, and loving."†

That tragic and accusing figure, the prostitute or harlot, is never mentioned in the Greek epics,‡ and no really vicious woman appears in either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. Affection often existed between the captive or slave woman and her lord, but before the regard arose she was of little account. A woman

* He also suppressed dowries, and Plutarch says that he did not wish marriages to be looked upon as money bargains, but to be entered upon for love and happiness, and the procreation of children. The English Church service goes no farther than this sentiment!

† Andrew Lang, in *The World of Homer*.

‡ She often appears in ancient Hebrew scriptures.

is offered as the first prize in the contests arranged by Achilles at the funeral of Patroclus, and* she was valued at the price of four oxen. It must be borne in mind, however, that this degradation was not due to innate contempt of woman, but to the system of slavery that priced and despised manhood in a similar manner for centuries. The position of slaves who had grown old in service was often a comfortable one, especially in the case of nurses. Euryclea advises and scolds, comforts and takes care of Telemachus as well as of Penelope, and her joy at the return of her master is unbounded. That a nurse was respected and well treated can also be gathered from the *Hymn to Demeter*† which breathes the spirit of the epic age.

Not so pleasing an impression is given in Homer of the Immortals as of human beings,‡ but the goddesses have more influence over the course of events than the gods. And the question arises: *Why* were there goddesses at all? Why did not the Greeks content themselves with making only gods in the image of men? Xenophanes long ago remarked on the likeness of the gods of different races to the people themselves.§

> "But mortal man made gods in his own image,
> Like to himself in vesture, voice and body."

* *Iliad*, Book XXIII.

† Mentioned by J. P. Mahaffy in *Social Life in Greece*. Only one MS. copy exists, discovered at Moscow, and now at Leyden.

‡ Miss J. E. Harrison has pointed out in *The Religion of Ancient Greece* that the cause of the constant conflict between Hera and Zeus is probably a reflection of the racial conflict between the Northern invaders, the Hellenes, who conquered the original Pelasgians and adapted their religion. "Hera is really a turbulent native princess, coerced but never subdued by an alien conqueror."

§ J. G. Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Chapter 2. Xenophanes lived at the end of the sixth century B.C.

And Professor Patrick Geddes in his sweeping survey of civilisation* remarks

> " But for the Greek there arose naturally what is for us again dawning as an ideal of eugenics, of education also; vitally expressed in a vision of divinities, beings that are at once normal and ideal, human yet superhuman. . . . Goddesses and gods thus expressed each the ideal, or supernorm of a phase of life . . . in each goddess, each god, there reappears the essential and characteristic, the logical and necessary expression of the corresponding life-phase, of Woman, and of Man."

Therefore, if the Greeks, and other nations, had not realised the power and influence of the feminine principle, they would have worshipped the masculine only. But the goddesses exhibit a strength of character and an energy only conquerable by brute force, and their characteristics must have been possessed to some extent by contemporary Greek women of high social class. Pallas Athene and Hera rule the fates of the armies in the Trojan War despite the wishes of the gods, and the former goddess is the guiding spirit of the *Odyssey*. Athena was indeed essentially the political divinity, and " as the fire of Vesta was maintained in Rome, so the lamp was perpetually burning in the shrine of Athena Polias, as a symbol of the city's perpetual life."† Euripides says of her :

> " O lady, thine is the basement of our land, thine is the city, whereof thou art mother, mistress, and guardian."

In one of the Scolia or Banquet Songs‡ she is apostrophised thus :

* In *The Masque of Ancient Learning* and *The Masque of Mediæval and Modern Learning*. The quotation is from the former.
† L. R. Farnell, *The Cult of the Greek States*, Vol. I.
‡ From *Greek Lyric Poets*, by Francis Brooks.

"Triton-born Pallas, queen Athene, maintain this city and its citizens without griefs and factions and untimely deaths, thou and thy sire."

Sophocles calls her "our dread Lady," "Queen of Chivalry,"* and "Golden daughter of Zeus."†

As a goddess of peace‡ she was the protectress of the arts, agriculture, weaving, etc., but with the fine arts of music and poetry she had less concern; as a goddess of war§ she was the embodiment of counsel, and of prudent and intelligent tactics, in contrast to Ares the personification of force and rash courage. In the *Iliad* he suffers defeat at her hands, when she exclaims:

"Fool, hast thou yet to learn how mightier far
My strength than thine, that me thou dar'st to meet?"‖

The virtues that Athena inspired and approved were political wisdom, courage, concord, discipline and self-restraint. Yet, although she remained virgin, she had little to do with chastity as an ideal of conduct¶ but together with Artemis** she symbolised, and implied the existence of, that type of woman, common in modern times, who is unmarried and gives her interest and energies to civic affairs. Public resolutions of great import, the cementing of an alliance, or the declaration of war were accompanied by prayers or vows to Athena.

Xenophon built a temple to Artemis on his grounds

* In *Œdipus at Colonus*.
† In *Œdipus Tyranus*.
‡ Her Pelasgian aspect.
§ The Hellenic Ideal. In her Pelasgian aspect she cherished agriculture and other peaceful arts.
‖ *Iliad*, Book XXI.
¶ L. R. Farnell.
** Artemis is entitled Lady of Justice in the *Medea* of Euripides. See also the hymn by the chorus of huntsmen in his *Hippolytus*, ommencing, "O Majesty, daughter of Zeus, dread Queen."

at Skillous in Elis, and gave to the goddess a tenth of the produce of his land; once a year he held a feast in her honour.* Originally Artemis, like her brother Apollo, was probably connected with medicinal herbs and presided over various healing arts; perhaps this gives a glimpse of woman's connection with early medicine and hygiene. †

> "Artemis, then, may be regarded as a witch with a herb garden, the patroness of women's medicine and women's magic. . . . She is content with the normal processes of nature over which she presides, and does not operate with philtres or artificial stimulants. Her magic is mainly protective."‡

Below Athena in the part her idea played in Greek civilisation stands Hera, the wife of Zeus, whose virginity was renewed every year, yet who represents the stately matron, ruling her domain and obtaining her desires. By her influence over her husband, exerted in this case in not an altogether estimable manner, she defeats his purpose and gains her own.§ Hera was essentially the goddess of women and the life of women is reflected in her.‖ Regarded as the protectress of married women, and as the goddess who sanctioned marriage, she was not considered to be offended at breaches of the marriage vow. Married life and its duties were not the highest Hellenic ideal, and this fact explains how Athena was a more influential civilising factor, and also the honoured position of the Hetairæ in later centuries. In Argos, however, Hera was recognised as the foundress of civilisation,

* See *The Schools of Hellas*, by K. J. Freeman.

† For an interesting theory regarding Artemis see the chapter on "The Origin of the Cult of Artemis," in *The Ascent of Olympus*, by Rendel Harris.

‡ From *The Ascent of Olympus*.

§ *Iliad*, Book XIV.

‖ See L. R. Farnell's *Cult of the Greek States*, Vol. I.

the power who taught humans how to sow the land ; for this the inhabitants termed her the Benefactress.

Iris is a very active spirit in the *Iliad* ; " silver-footed Thetis " from the sea gives comfort and advice to her son Achilles and obtains new armour for him from Hephaestus ; Aphrodite brings charm and beauty into the lives of the Immortals. She was the power that personified beauty and human love. The simple fragment of a Homeric hymn expresses her :

> " I will sing of Cytherea of Cyprus who gives sweet gifts to men, and who wears a smile ever upon her lovely face, and brings the flower of loveliness."

Greek imagination depicted Aphrodite as—

> " the power that causes the love that is in heaven and earth, the love that works in the rain, and brings forth cattle and herbs for the use of man. . . . The idea of a goddess who personified the cosmic power of love in the world of animal and vegetative life . . . received the deepest and most spiritual expression in the national poetry, and even acquired a certain philosophic significance as a pantheistic doctrine."*

But advanced thought or profound religious consciousness in Greek speculation was concerned rather with Zeus or Apollo than with the feminine deities ; though this is not noticeable until a later period—chiefly in the times of the great dramatists who refined the crudities of the Homeric divinities, and endowed the gods with their own maturer conclusions.

The great share taken by goddesses in the Olympian life, and the unconscious revelation of feminine characteristics and influence can be seen in Hesiod's

* L. R. Farnell, *Cult of the Greek States*, Vol. II.

poems : *Works and Days* and *The Theogony.** Hesiod deals more with goddesses than women, and to the latter he ascribes many ills ; Pandora first let loose all the evils of earth in opening her casket, and he inveighs against womanhood as a " beauteous bane." But it must be remembered he is thinking of the parasitic woman who works not, and neither does she spin :

" Pernicious is the race ; the woman tribe
Dwell upon earth, a mighty bane to man :
No mates for wasting want but luxury
. . . such are womankind :
They, whom the Thunderer sent, a bane to men,
Ill helpmates of intolerable toils.
Yet more of ill instead of good he gave :
The man who, shunning wedlock, thinks to shun
The vexing cares that haunt the woman state,
And lonely waxes old, shall feel the want
Of one to foster his declining years."†

Yet even here he recognises that a wife would foster the declining years of her husband ; and he can praise highly, as in his account of Alcmena :

" She all the gentle race of womankind
In height surpassed and beauty ; nor with her
Might one in prudence vie, of all who sprang
From mortal fair ones blending in embrace
With mortal men."

Hesiod's personification of Justice as a woman is a high compliment to the sex, and it indicates the power that woman can exert :

" A virgin pure is Justice, and her birth
From Jove himself ; a creature in her worth
And nobleness, revered by gods on high."‡

* Hesiod lived about the ninth century B.C. One of his lost works was entitled *The Catalogue of Women* or *Heroines*, in five parts. It is mentioned by Suidas.

† From *The Theogony*. Elton's translation.

‡ From *The Shield of Hercules*. Elton's translation.

His praise of the women among the Immortals resounds throughout *The Theogony*; he speaks of—

"A glorious sisterhood of goddesses."

But to Hecate is ascribed most power and glory—

"Whom o'er all others the Saturnian Jove
Hath honour'd and endow'd with splendid gifts;
With power on earth and o'er th' uncultured sea,
Nor less from under starry heaven she shared
Of glory, midst th' immortals honour'd most."

To every occupation Hecate can bring prosperity, and every enterprise can be helped by her; she even "sits upon the sacred judgment-seat of venerable monarchs" and she "is honour'd with all attributes amongst immortals."*

The fact that the nine Muses were each represented by a woman is another tribute to the feminine and its specific genius; "all the main thinkable modes of high activity,"† poetry, song, dance, the drama, history, and astronomy were under the inspiration of womanhood.‡ Why did this conception arise if not as a result of the feeling that intuition and aspiration were possessed or inspired by women? Hesiod says of the Muses

"Olympian maids
. . . to evils they
Yield an oblivious balm, to torturing cares
Rest . . . whose minds are knit
In harmony; whose thought is only song;
Within whose bosoms the free spirit dwells."§

* The quotations are from *The Theogony*. Elton's translation. See the context for other instances of her authority.

† The phrase is that of Professor Patrick Geddes.

‡ The Muses were: Clio, the muse of History; Euterpe, of Lyric and Patriotic Poetry; Thalia, of Comedy; Melpomene, of Tragedy; Terpsichore, of Choral Song and Dance; Erato, of Erotic Poetry; Polymnia, of the Sublime Hymn and of Wisdom; Urania, of Astronomy and Architecture, and Calliope, of Epic Poetry.

§ From *The Theogony*. Elton's translation.

Could the last line be possible if Hesiod had dwelt among a degraded or subject womanhood? Homer gives evidence through his pictures of mortal women, and Hesiod transfers feminine qualities to goddesses; both testify to women within whom "the free spirit dwells." But they are always women of a high social class; Hesiod treats slave women, naturally, as mere property, and in giving information and rules in connection with farming, he advises

> "A house, a ploughing steer, a maid be thine,
> Not wife, but purchased slave, to tend thy kine."

Of Themis, the personification of the order of things, whom Aschylus calls "Mighty mother, worshipped Themis,"* a Greek scholar has said that she is

> "the projection, the impersonation of Earth and of the prophetic powers of the earth . . . above and beyond all other gods. . . . She is the substratum, she is the sense above as well as below each and every god . . . not religion, but the stuff of which religious representations are made."†

From the earliest times gods and goddesses were worshipped by women, and priestesses held a high and honoured position. The women of Eli made invocations to Dionysus, to call him from the sea at spring time; at the sanctuary of Herakles at Thespiae a virgin acted as his priestess till her death;‡ and at Brassiae they had their own temple where none but women might enter. His thiasus or band of followers was exclusively formed of women as being those who experience most directly and sensitively the influence of things which touch thought through the senses.

The hymn to Apollo sung at the Ionian festival at

* At the end of *Prometheus Bound*.

† Jane E. Harrison, in *Themis: A Study of the Social Origin of the Greek Religion*.

‡ Pausanias IX, 276. He lived in the second century A.D.

Delos incidentally mentions that women participated in the fair :

> " There, in thy honour, Apollo, the long-robed Ionians assemble, with their children and their gracious dames. . . . First they hymn Apollo, then Leto and Artemis delighting in arrows ; and then they sing the praise of heroes of yore, and of women, and throw their spell over the tribes of men."*

A festival known as the Thesmophoria was conducted exclusively by women, and no men were admitted ; it has been conjectured † that this was because it celebrated earth's (Demeter's) *productiveness*, and because women were supposed to have stronger magic.

> " In certain departments of the religious activity of the old world, and in certain realms of the religious consciousness the female organism may have been regarded with psychological truth as more efficacious and more sensitive than the male . . . the women were allowed exclusive ministration because they could put themselves more easily into sympathetic *rapport* with the earth-goddess, and because the generative powers of the latter, which the ritual desired to maintain and to quicken, resembled more nearly their own."‡

Another Scolia or Banquet Song § is addressed to Demeter—

> " I sing in the garland-weaving hour of Olympian Demeter, mother of wealth, and of thee, Persephone, daughter of Zeus. Hail to thee and do ye guard well this city."

The worship of Demeter,‖ the great Earth Mother, was one of the most important in the whole Hellenic religion, and from it we gain a picture of early

* Quoted in Prof. R. C. Jebb's *Primer on Greek Literature.*
† By L. R. Farnell, in *The Cult of the Greek States,* Vol. III.
‡ Farnell, *The Cult of the Greek States.*
§ Francis Brooks, *Greek Lyric Poets.*
‖ For further accounts of ceremonies connected with Demeter and Persephone, see Frazer's *Golden Bough,* Vol. V, Part 2.

agrarian life, of the social usages on which the family was based, and also of the highest religious aspirations of the people. Demeter was also connected with the Eleusinian mysteries,* organised by the State and accompanied by much pageantry and splendid rites. Both men and women were initiated into these mysteries.† At the same time‡ many private and secret societies existed, composed of men and women who practised ascetism and were known as Orphics, § living the "Orphic life" and adopting the mysticism of the Orphic poets. Pythagoras is supposed to have founded his school at Crotona on principles akin to the ones followed by these communities. Kallixenes, the Rhodian, describes‖ a procession in honour of Dionysus and mentions—

> "A woman of great beauty and stature, decked out with much goodly gold; in one of her hands she held a wreath of peach-blossom, in the other a palm staff, and she was called Penteteris. She was followed by four Horai, ¶ dressed in character and each carrying her own fruits."

And in various reliefs can be seen women's share in sacrifice and participation in processions. In a ceremony that reminds us of our King and Queen of May, the marriage of Dionysus with the "Queen"** of the State was represented every year in the month Anthesterior (the flowery month of Spring). Whether

* Probably brought from Egypt (where Isis corresponded to Demeter) by way of Crete. See J. E. Harrison's *Religion of Ancient Greece*.

† Plutarch.

‡ About the sixth century B.C.

§ G. R. S. Mead, in *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, has a section on Greece, where he gives particulars.

‖ In his *History of Alexandria*.

¶ The Seasons.

** The second magistrate of the State was called the King, and his wife the Queen. The functions of both were religious. See Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens*, and Plato's *Politicus*.

the part of the divine husband was played by an image or a man is not certain, but the consummation of the divine union was graphically enacted in the official residence of the "King."* Some fragments of songs sung by women while dancing† are left to us, as well as those sung by men, but it does not appear that the two sexes danced together. That they fought together occasionally is probable, as Athenaeus mentions young men and maidens wrestling in the gymnasia at Chios; and on a black figured amphora at Munich is depicted a wrestling match between Peleus and Atalanta; on another a woman is seated as judge at a wrestling match between men.‡

Significant is the fact that in the whole of Greek literature no disrespectful word is found about the Amazons,§ and in the frescoes at the British Museum they appear as beautiful women, strong and graceful, who take defeat and win victory equally with the men warriors. The mere representation implies a conception of a womanhood far from degraded. Herodotus tells the story of the Amazons,|| and mentions the Sarmatian women, who hunted on horseback with their husbands, took part in war, and wore a similar dress to the men. Their habits probably gave rise to the various myths connected with Amazons.

Women, in a sense, initiated the great Olympic games; every fourth year a college called the Sixteen Women wove a robe for Hera, and held games called the Heraea,¶ which were practised before the Olympic

* J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, Chapter 1.
† F. B. Jevons, *A History of Greek Literature*.
‡ Described in E. Norman Gardiner's *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*.
§ Mrs. Putnam notices this in *The Lady*.
|| In Book IV.
¶ Pausanias V, 16, 2.

games started. The games of virgins or Parthenia gave the name to the month Parthenios, and were held at the new moon every eight years, also before those in honour of Zeus were established. The goddess had originally no connection with Zeus; she reigns alone at Argos and Samos, and her temple at Olympos is distinct and far earlier than that of Zeus.* When the men's games were instituted, it was arranged that, in order to save the dignity of each, the games in honour of Zeus and Hera should be held alternately the one fourteen days before the other; this accounts for the variation of the dates of the Olympic festival. The course for women at the Olympic Stadium was 500 instead of 600 feet long, and the winners received a crown of olive and a share of the cow sacrificed to Hera. They were allowed to dedicate statues of themselves,† and probably the Girl Runner now in the Vatican is one of these votive statues, for beside the figure is a palm branch on a stump as a symbol of victory.

During the Lyric Age‡ two poets deal with some fullness about women, but neither can be regarded as expressing the average view. Archilochus, the satirist, inveighs against woman because Neobule, whom he passionately loved, and who was promised in marriage to him, did not marry him owing to her father's broken word; poetry written under the stress of feeling caused by such an experience is not likely to reflect women correctly. Simonides of Armogus habitually took a gloomy view of life, and saw the worst in people; his longest fragment details the

* Hera is Pelasgian, but Zeus is a northern importation of the Hellenes. See J. E. Harrison's *Religion of Ancient Greece*.

† Pausanius V, xvi. 3.

‡ Seventh to fifth century B.C., approximately.

characteristics and tempers of women and says that the gods made them after the likeness of different animals, the fox, cat, bee, etc.; he describes untidy, curious, dull, fickle and luxurious women, giving the palm to the bee-like one, virtuous and industrious, who brings happiness and prosperity. In another fragment, however, Simonides, perhaps unconsciously, shows the maternal love of a high order as well as the noble resignation possessed by a woman, so his age must have presented the pattern of dignity and goodness in women. The Lament of Danae is as follows: *

" When rude around the high-wrought ark
The tempests raged, the waters dark
Around the mother tossed and swelled;
With not unmoistened cheek she held
Her Perseus in her arms and said:
' What sorrows bow this hapless head!
Thou sleep'st the while, thy gentle breast
Is heaving in unbroken rest,
In this our dark unjoyous home.
Clamped with the rugged brass, the gloam
Scarce broken by the doubtful light
That gleams from yon dim fires of night.
But thou, unwet thy clustering hair,
Heed'st not the billows raging wild,
The moaning of the bitter air
Wrapt in thy purple robe, my beauteous child!
Oh! seemed this peril perilous to thee
How sadly to my words of fear
Wouldst thou bend down thy listening ear!
But now sleep on, my child! Sleep, thou wide sea!
Sleep, my unutterable agony!
Oh! change thy counsels, Jove, our sorrows end!
And if my rash intemperate zeal offend,
For my child's sake, his father pardon me.' "

The appearance of married women in public was still common,† and that women were not cooped up

* This version is by Dean Milman.
† J. P. Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece.*

is illustrated by the fable of Agnodice,* wherein Cheiron the Centaur founded the art of doctoring from herbs, Apollo cared for the eyes, and Ascelepius began clinical medicine. But there were no midwives, so many women died through modesty. To avoid this, the girl, Agnodice, cut off her hair, dressed in male clothes, and learned the art. She practised as a man, only the women she attended knowing her sex, and was much in request. The other doctors became enraged, and accused her of corrupting her patients; when her sex was discovered they were still more furious. But at the trial of Agnodice the women of Athens crowded in the court, saying to the judges: "You are not husbands, but enemies, for you condemn her who has saved our lives." As a result the Athenians amended the law, making it legal for freeborn women to learn the art of medicine.† Incidentally the story shows that women were not secluded, and not always ignorant.

Sappho ‡ (or Psappha) gleams as the brightest star among lyric poets, in this, or any age: her surpassing artistic genius expressed in the technique of her metre, and the music of her verse, her passionate energy, her worship of beauty and her imaginative scope place her beyond all her contemporaries and most poets of other times. The aspersions of later comic dramatists, and the fable of her leap from the Leucadian cliff for love of Phaon are now generally disregarded; they were concocted some two centuries after her death. She is mentioned by Solon, Herodotus, Plato (who

* Quoted by James Donaldson, in *Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome and among the Early Christians.*

† It is of interest to note in this connection that Homer mentions Hecamede, who mixed potions.

‡ She was born at Mitylene on the island of Lesbos, where she flourished, about the end of the seventh century B.C.

calls her the Tenth Muse), Aristotle, and Strabo, and the superlative nature of the praise bestowed upon her work is shared by critics of all ages. Of the few fragments extant the *Hymn to Aphrodite* * is the longest, and exquisite in its symmetry. Longinus,† in his treatise on the Sublime, quoted the *Ode to Anactoria* as an example. And a modern writer‡ speaks of her thus :

> " Never before these songs were sung, and never since, did the human soul, in the grip of a fiery passion, utter a cry like hers ; and from the executive point of view, in directness, in lucidity, in that high imperious verbal economy which only nature can teach the artist, she has no equal, and none worthy to take the place of a second."

Perhaps Catullus, and Dante in the *Vita Nuova*, approach nearest to her in fervency of passion. Swinburne§ also places her above all other poets, saying that she is " beyond all question and comparison the very greatest poet that ever lived."

Thus the " sustained judgment of a thousand years of Greece " ‖ is justified by the verdict of modern poets and critics.

Not only does Sappho's genius proclaim a woman's power in art, but her position as head of a woman's college indicates a freedom for women unrivalled for centuries to come. The Lesbians were proud to claim her as their citizen, and as the leader of a school of music and poetry ; her image engraved on their coins

* There are versions of this by different poets in H. T. Wharton's *Sappho*, where can be found all that is known of the poetess.

† Or Dionysius, third century A.D. The treatise mentioned is his only extant work.

‡ Theodore Watts-Dunton, in his *Essay on Poetry*.

§ In an appreciation that appeared in *The Fortnightly Review*, of February 21st, 1914.

‖ From the introduction to Bliss Carman's paraphrases of some of Sappho's fragments.

is a sign of the honour paid to her. At that age and place the poetic art was cultivated by women as well as men, and her practice of collecting a number of younger women about her was not infrequent among the Æolians and Dorians.* These people allowed an untrammelled liberty to women that later on shocked the Athenians, and perhaps helped to give rise to the libels on Sappho's character.

Alcæus, her fellow-townsman, and a poet, addressed an ode to her :

> " Violet-crowned, chaste Sappho, with thy dark tresses and sweet smile, fain would I speak, but awe (or shame) restrains me."

To this she answered :

> " If thou wert longing for right things or fair things,
> If thy lips trembled with nothing that was sinful,
> Shame had not held thee from speaking out thy meaning ;
> Silence had not chained thy tongue."†

A fragment of Sappho's poetry was discovered in Egypt‡ recently, but many of the lines known to us are quoted by Athenæus§ to illustrate points of rhetoric or grammar, and they suffer in translation.

Connected with Pindar,‖ the national lyrist of Greece, are the names of two women : Myrtis, who taught him, and Corinna, also a pupil of Myrtis, who competed against him and is said to have defeated him in poetical competitions five times.¶ She had employed Theban

* F. B. Jevons, *A History of Greek Literature*. Compare the practice of Socrates in gathering younger men about him.

† Edwin Arnold's translation.

‡ At Oxyrhynchus, on papyrus, but part of it is too damaged for restoration.

§ A native of Naucratis in Egypt, who lived in the third century A.D. He wrote the *Deipnosophistiæ*, which exhibits varied and extensive reading and contains a mass of information on all subjects.

‖ Middle of sixth century B.C.

¶ Pausanias thinks this was because she composed in the local dialect, while Pindar employed Doric.

mythology, and Pindar imitated her use of it, showing her the rather exuberant result. "You should sow with the hand and not with the sack," said Corinna.* Many other poetesses flourished in the Lyric Age: Telesilla of Argos wrote verses and also took up arms against the Spartans when they invaded her country; Praxilla of Sicyon, besides distinguishing herself in other forms of poetry, composed songs that became very popular at Athens.†

The religion of Greece was largely literary, in the sense that it formed the framework or background of much of their drama and poetry. Especially in early periods the plays were essentially religious festivals, and had developed from songs and ritual offered to various divinities; at the beginning or conclusion of dramatic performances the magistrates made libations to various divinities,‡ of whom Dionysus was the one most often honoured. Women attended the theatres and were seated separately from the men,§ while priests and priestesses sat in places specially assigned to them, immediately behind the front row.‖ Thus religious veneration surrounded the sacred legends which formed the subjects of Greek tragedy; and the conception of Fate, and the Gods, and the meaning of Life presented by the dramatists was that which permeated the thought of Athens. And they present a noble array of women in their plays.¶

* R. C. Jebb, *Greek Literature.*

† For many other names, see F. B. Jevons, *A History of Greek Literature.*

‡ H. Smith, *Festivals, Games and Amusements.*

§ Compare the present custom at Jewish synagogues.

‖ See *The Attic Theatre,* by A. E. Haigh.

¶ The stories of the heroines of Homer and in Attic tragedies are told in *Women of the Classics,* by Mary Sturgeon.

"Consider for a moment the whole magnificent file of heroines in Greek tragedy, both for good and evil. . . . I doubt if there ever has been a period in the history of the world, not even excepting the Elizabethan Age and the Nineteenth Century, when such a gallery of heroic women has been presented in drama."*

Æschylus† is so concerned with vast moral and religious issues that his dramas are almost symbolical, and the characters appear "larger than human." Clytemnestra is magnificent in her wickedness, and scorns to repent. In revenge for the sacrifice of her daughter Iphigenia, and to prevent her own connection with Ægisthus from being discovered, she murders her husband Agamemnon on his return from the Trojan Wars, and tells the Chorus :

"But what I say, ye know, or ought to know,
I say with fearless heart. Your praise or blame
Is one to me. Here Agamemnon lies,
My husband, dead, the work of this right hand—
The hand of a true workman. Thus it stands."

And when they blame her she answers

"For him thou hast no curse, the bloody man
Who, when the fleecy flocks innumerous, pastured,
Passed the brute by, and sacrificed my child,
My best beloved, fruit of my throes, to lull
The Thracian blasts asleep."‡

And she exhorts her weak lover Ægisthus not to heed the warnings of the Chorus, for—

"Thou and I with wise command shall surely sway these Argive halls."

No touch of remorse reaches her, and when she herself is murdered by her son Orestes, her fate is met with

* Gilbert Murray, in *The Rise of the Greek Epic*.

† 525–436 B.C. He fought at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataæ, was conservative in tendency, and retired from Athens when his younger rival, Sophocles, became more honoured than he.

‡ *Agamemnon*, translated by John Stuart Blackie.

courage. A strong woman, whose passions and strength had been perverted, she typifies the place and power of women, and is more carefully and clearly drawn than any other character in the extant plays of Æschylus, except perhaps Prometheus. In the last play of the Triology dealing with the fate of Agamemnon, *The Eumenides*, when Orestes in his turn is pursued by the Furies for the murder of his mother, and he flees to Apollo for protection, it is a *goddess*, Pallas Athena, who decides his fate by her casting vote and pacifies the Furies, transforming them from goddesses of avenging justice to dispensers of mercy. Cassandra, the unhappy daughter of Priam, who, though a princess, is doomed to be a slave in the house of Agamemnon, has the gift of prophecy, but also the curse that none will believe her. She may be regarded as the symbol of that intuitional faculty, more widespread in women than in men, which rushes to the mark with no intermediate reasoning, and sees, but cannot prove; hence the disbelief of others whose insight is less keen. These three characters, Clytemnestra, Pallas Athena, and Cassandra express the conception formed by Æschylus of the ability and importance of women and of the large part they play in human history. Lesser instances occur in the *Choephoræ*, where Electra is the leading character; she goes with her maidens to present the libations at the tomb of Agamemnon, and when her brother Orestes appears she acts on her own initiative. An interesting figure is the garrulous old nurse; and the libation-bearers, from whom the play derives its name, act as a chorus of Greek maidens. In *The Suppliants* the chorus is the chief item, and consists of the fifty daughters of

Danaus who have escaped to Argos to avoid marriage with their cousins and to beg shelter from the King :

> " That we, a gracious mother's gracious seed,
> By no harsh kindred wooed,
> May live on Apian ground unyoked and unsubdued."

Although Æschylus does not use love as a motive in his plays, he here seems to support those who resist marriage without love, and to strike at the Athenian law which allowed a woman to be bestowed with property, and a husband to bequeath his wife to his nearest relative or to the executor of his will. Such low estimate of women *in law* is partly explained by the ancient belief that a woman took no share in the creation of children, but only nursed them within her.* Thus Apollo says in *The Eumenides*

> " . . . Mark me ! whom we call
> The mother begets not, she is but the nurse,
> Whose fostering breast the new-sown seed receives.
> The father truly gets ; the dam but cherishes
> A stranger-bud, that if the gods be kind,
> May blossom soon and bear. Behold a proof !
> Without a mother may a child be born,
> Not so without a father. Which to witness
> Here is this daughter of Olympian Jove,†
> Not nursed in darkness, in the womb, and yet
> She stands a goddess, heavenly mother ne'er
> Bore greater."‡

With such an opinion it can be seen that ignorance rather than malice gave to woman her legal position.

Prometheus Bound emphasises other feminine characteristics ; Io courageously insists on hearing the truth,

* An Egyptian belief, probably introduced thence into Greece.

† He is referring to Pallas Athene, who was said to have sprung from her father's head.

‡ Translation by John Stuart Blackie.

" . . . but do not seek, I pray thee,
In pity for me, to drop soft lies ; for nothing
Is worse than the smooth craft of practised phrase."

The chorus, consisting of the Oceanides (ocean maids) are sympathetic and staunch to Prometheus, sharing at the end his doom in Tartarus.

Of all the heroines of Greek Drama perhaps Antigone stands foremost, and she has been called the most perfect figure in Greek poetry.* Sophocles delineates her with minuteness in two plays,† and leaves a living portrait of a woman strong in duty and action and sense of responsibility, and not lacking in tenderness. She endures hardship and exile with her father, and sacrifices her life for the peace of her brother's shade. Her weaker sister, Ismene, also cares for their father and exclaims

" In parents' cause, if toil there be, we must not reck of toil."

Œdipus recognises their love :

" 'Tis to these sisters, girls as they are, that, so far as nature enables them, I owe my daily food, and a shelter in the land and offices of kinship ; the brothers have bartered their sire for a throne and sceptred sway, and rule of the realm."

With a clear ideal before her Antigone passes through her tragic life and goes to her death upheld by such thoughts as—

" . . . nor could I ever think
A mortal's law of power or strength sufficient
To abrogate the unwritten law divine
Immutable, eternal, not like these
Of yesterday, but made ere time began.
Shall man persuade me, then, to violate
Heaven's great commands and make the gods my foes ? "

* By A. J. Symonds, in *Studies of the Greek Poets*.
† *Œdipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*.

Sophocles makes her give little thought to her lover Hæmon, but in another play * he makes a woman's love the main motive, and discloses the manner in which wives regarded their husband's wanderings. The unhappy but wise Deianeira, another woman of courage, wishes to face the truth :

> " Nay, I implore thee by Zeus, whose lightnings go forth over the high glens to Œta, do not cheat me of the truth. For she to whom thou wilt speak is not ungenerous, nor hath she yet to learn that the human heart is inconstant to its joys.
>
> " Nay, tell me the whole truth. . . . *Not* to learn the truth, that, indeed, would pain me ; but to know it—what is there terrible in that ? . . . To thee I say,—deceive whom thou wilt, but ever speak the truth to me."

When she hears that Heracles sacked a town in order to capture a woman whom he has sent to his home, she understands too well :

> " They are not wise who stand to buffet against Love ; for Love rules the gods as he will, and me ; and why not another woman, such as I am ? So I am mad indeed, if I blame my husband, because that distemper hath seized him ; or this woman, his partner in a thing which is no shame to them and no wrong to me. . . . Hath not Heracles wedded others ere now—ay, more than living man,—and no one of them hath had harsh word or taunt from me ; nor shall this girl, though her whole being should be absorbed in her passion ; for indeed I felt a profound pity when I beheld her, because her beauty hath wrecked her life, and she, hapless one, all innocent, hath brought her fatherland to ruin and to bondage."

However, she finds she cannot bear to share Heracles, and instead of railing, for " anger ill beseems a woman of understanding," she endeavours to find a remedy. Had women been weak creatures in the days of Sophocles such portraiture had been impossible ; nor could he have conceived of an Electra, who saved her

* *Trachiniæ.*

brother's life when her father was murdered by her mother. To the Greeks vengeance was a sacred duty, and in her stern devotion she urges Orestes to avenge his father's murder. Unable to dissimulate and live at peace like her sister Chrysothemis, who forms a foil to her, she continually mourns, and is ill-treated in consequence. Her character is delineated in greater detail than by Æschylus,* but that is the case with all the characters of the later dramatist; and he includes more varieties of women. Sophocles does not sweep the skies as does Æschylus; he measures the earth and lifts his eyes unto the hills and his

> "... even-balanced soul
> . . . . . .
> ... saw life steadily and saw it whole."†

Of himself he said: "I have represented men as they ought to be, Euripides men as they are"; but even in idealisation there must be a background of reality, and with his deep insight into human nature he could not fail to reflect true images of the souls he saw about him.‡

Still more closely did Euripides§ follow the lines of human nature, and of such varied types are the women of his plays that it has been possible for critics to detect in him both a misogynist and a feminist according to the direction of their search. Probably he would himself have disclaimed either term and would have professed to paint women as he saw them, with their imperfections and discontentments, as well

* Compare the *Choephori* of Æschylus with the *Electra* of Sophocles.

† M. Arnold's sonnet *To a Friend.*

‡ Sophocles wrote about 100 tragedies, seven of which remain. He died at the age of 91, his life practically extending through the fifth century B.C.

§ 480–406 B.C. Seventeen of his plays remain.

as their strength and nobility and great mother love. A study of his plays will reveal the fact that diatribes against women are usually spoken by those who have been specially wronged through (not necessarily *by*) a woman, or by those who are themselves in the wrong and are being blamed by a woman. Hippolytus exclaims

> " Why hast thou given a home beneath the sun,
> Zeus, unto woman, specious curse to man ?
> . . . . . .
> . . . soon as we go about to bring
> This bane to the home, we hurl to earth its weal."

But he was unmarried, and knew little of women, although he inconsistently worshipped a woman divinity, Artemis, as his special goddess. And Jason, when Medea objects to his deceit and desertion of her for the sake of wealth and power, cries out

> " . . . Would that mortals otherwise
> Could get them babes, that womankind were not.
> And so no curse had lighted upon men."

In neither case is the woman innately vicious : Phædra* has been bewitched by Aphrodite, and Medea, the passionate, unconventional†, yet brave and determined woman who had instructed and saved Jason, has been deeply wronged, terrible though her vengeance is. Of the tragedy of womanhood the plays of Euripides express much, and his understanding of the limited scope of women, and their baffled energies, is remarkable, only to be explained by the actual presence, among the women of his age, of dissatisfaction with the general condition of their sex.‡ Medea voices one

* In *Hippolytus*.

† She says : " Of many things I think not as think many."

‡ It may have been the roots of this which flowered in the circle of Aspasia.

lament to the chorus in her undeserved desertion : *

" For justice sits not in the eyes of man

. . . . . .

. . . unlooked-for fell this blow on me,
And brake mine heart. Undone I am ; have lost
All grace of life, and long to die, my friends.
For he that was my all,—thou know'st it well,—
My lord, of all men basest hath become :
Surely, of all creatures that have life and wit,
We women are of all things wretchedest,
Who, first, must needs, as buys the highest bidder,
Thus buy a husband,† and our body's master
So win—for deeper depth of ill is this.
Nay, risk is dire therein,—or shall we gain
An evil lord or good ? For change is shame
To woman, nor may she renounce her spouse.

. . . . . .

For the man, when at home they fret his soul,
Goes forth, and stays his loathing heart's disgust,
Unto a friend or age-mate turning him.
We have but one, one heart to seek for comfort.
But we, say they, live an unperilled life
At home, while they do battle with the spear.
Falsely they deem : twice would I under shield
Stand, rather than bear childbirth peril once."‡

Throughout the tragedies of *Hecuba* and *Andromache* the sorrows of a mother rend the heart ; the depth and force of love for their children seems one of the strongest personal feelings experienced by the Greeks ; in a fragment Euripides writes

" Nought is more dear to children than their mother.
Sons, love your mother ; for there is no love
Sweeter than this that can be loved by men."§

* The old nurse says that she was—
" in all things serving Jason's weal,
Which is the chief salvation of the home,
When wife stands not in variance with her lord."

† She refers to the dowry.

‡ A. S. Way's translation. The last argument is familiar twenty-five centuries later !

§ From *Erechtheus*.

And in the *Bacchæ** Dionysus is on a journey through the world to found a new religion, the first motive of which is the vindication of the memory of his mother, Semele; his presence is everywhere her justification.†

Of love between the sexes, as it is now idealised, with its delicacies of insight and its spiritual yearnings, there is some slight indication, but nothing to any degree that the moderns, typified by Dante or Elizabeth Barrett Browning, would have acknowledged as adequate. A fragment of Euripides glimpses the light:

"Glad she is, if aught untoward hap, to show she feels his care:
Joy and sorrow of the husband, aye, the loyal wife will share:
Yea, if thou art sick, in spirit will thy wife be sick with thee,
Bear the half of all thy burdens—nought unsweet accounteth she:
For with those we love our duty bids us taste the cup of bliss
Not alone, the cup of sorrow also—what is love but this?"‡

Electra also details a wife's duties to the peasant whose wife she is forced to be, though he leaves the marriage one in name only, and she expresses her appreciation of his restraint:

"Kind I account thee, even as the Gods,
Who in mine ills hast not insulted me.
. . . . . .
High fortune this, when men for sore mischance
Find such physician as I find in thee.

* Of Euripides.

† There is an old Etruscan mirror (mentioned in Tyrrell's introduction to the *Bacchæ*) which shows him lifting up his arms about her, satisfied at last.

‡ Quoted in introduction to *Euripides in English Verse*, by A. S. Way, Vol. II.

I ought, as strength shall serve, yea, though forbid,
To ease thy toil, that lighter be thy load,
And share thy burdens. Work enow without
Hast thou: beseems that I should keep the house
In order. When the toiler cometh home,
'Tis sweet to find the household fair arrayed."*

Not often in ancient Greece is there found a man of the sexual delicacy of feeling exhibited by this peasant,† but the type existed,‡ for Euripides is too faithful to nature to create imaginary qualities in either men or women. Alcestis is one of his noblest characters:

" Yea, in all men's sight
The noblest of women on earth that have been
. . . . . .
Let her be sure that glorious she dies."

sing the Chorus when she gives her life in exchange for her husband's.§ Her slaves bewail her as the " mother to the whole household." No misogynist could create such a character, nor one like Iphigenia, whose willing sacrifice of her young life for her beloved country's sake stands as a supreme achievement in patriotism:

" So, resolved I am to die; and fain am I that this be done
Gloriously—that I thrust ignoble craven thoughts away.
. . . . . .
Unto me all mighty Hellas looks; I only can bestow
Boons upon her—sailing of her galleys, Phrygia's overthrow,
Safety for her daughters from barbarians in the days to come.
. . . . . .

* *Electra*. A. S. Way's translation.

† He says:

" If any name me fool, that I should take
A young maid to mine home, and touch her not,
Let him know that he meteth chastity
By his own soul's base measure—base as he."

‡ Hippolytus is another example.

§ The lament of Alcestis in bidding farewell to her home and possessions, as described by the handmaid in *Alcestis*, is one of pathetic beauty.

All this great deliverance I in death shall compass, and my name
As one who gave to Hellas freedom, shall be blessing-crowned."*

As a reflection of his age, and as introducing a noble conception of a womanhood able to do and suffer greatly, Euripides ranks high in the catalogue of interpreters.† The same cannot be said of Aristophanes, though his satires at least indicate prevailing conditions, and causes for the satire. Yet since his spirit touched everything with ridicule and contempt, it must be denied that he evinced any special animus against women ; and one of his plays in a modernised version‡ was beautifully represented in London as suffragist propaganda. Marking unrest in women, three comedies deal exclusively with their concerns, and their desires for fuller life and more influence in affairs. The best of these, *Lysistrata*, implies that women realised the waste of war, and could use their power to end it, and this, acting on Lysistrata's advice, they did. In the speeches the same arguments that the feminist movement made familiar, are brought forward, the same complaints made by women, the same abuse poured forth by the lower type of man. Lysistrata, the organiser and originator of the disturbance, says, when endeavouring to stop the war :

" I am a woman, it is true ; but sense is in me ; and of myself I am not ill off in respect of intellect. By having

* *Iphigenia in Aulis.* A. S. Way's translation. This drama was first produced after Euripides' death.

† A perusal of his plays will reveal many more types of women than can be indicated here—Aithra, Polyxena, Makaria, Evadne, are all worth study. And his Fragments abound in lines descriptive of mother-love and domestic happiness.

‡ *Lysistrata*, paraphrased by Laurence Housman, and produced by Miss Gertrude Kingston in 1911.

often heard the remarks of my father, and my elders, I have been not ill-educated. I wish to take and justly chide you in common who . . . are destroying Grecian men and Grecian cities with your armies, when barbarians are before you as enemies."*

When told that women have no concern with war she exclaims :

"We bear more than twice as much of it as you do, who in the first instance bore sons and sent them forth as soldiers."

And the Chorus of Women also express a sense of duty to the State :

"Do I not owe it to the state to give it some good advice : But if I am a woman do not grudge me this, if I introduce something better than the present state of affairs. For I have a part in the contribution ; for I contribute men."

Lysistrata is asked to give her story accounting for the women's rebellion :

"I will do so. During the former war and former time, through our modesty we bore with you men, whatever you did ; for you did not allow us to mutter ; and then you did not please us. But we perceived you very well ; and oftentimes when you were at home we used to hear that you had determined some important matter badly ; and then being pained internally, we used to ask you with a smile, 'What has been determined by you to-day among the people to post up on the pillar about peace ?' 'What's that to you ?' the man used to say, 'will you not be silent ?' And I used to be silent. . . . So then I kept silence at home. We used to hear perhaps of some other more pernicious decree of yours ; and then we used to ask, 'How is it, husband, that you manage these matters so foolishly ?' But he, having looked askance at me, used immediately to tell me that, 'if I did not weave my warp I would wail loudly in my head, but war shall be a care to men.'"

In another play† Aristophanes represents women

* Literal translation by W. J. Hickie, from whose version all the quotations from Aristophanes are taken.

† The *Ecclesiazusæ*.

as seizing the reins of the State through discontent at the manner in which men conduct affairs, but the resulting community of women among men is made to happen more as a device to raise laughter, in ridicule of some philosophers' suggestions, than as a result of insight into women's wishes. Reporting a speech made by a woman disguised as a man, a citizen says that women did not divulge the secrets of the Thesmophoria,* did not act the informer, did not bring actions, nor put down the democracy ; but he praised the women for many good qualities, and for very many other reasons. As every other means of governing the State had been tried and failed, let them entrust women with the administration of affairs ; under them there would be no poor, and theft and slander would cease, for all would be content.† Whether Aristophanes deliberately misrepresented Euripides in the third woman play‡ cannot be said, but he carried his pitiless satire and persecution of that dramatist to the extent that he represents women as determining to punish Euripides at a meeting of the Thesmophoria, for his representations of their sex. He is vanquished and made to promise that he will not abuse women in the future. The Chorus in this play gives voice to the complaints of women with regard to the estimation in which they are held, and indirectly the conviction is forced that all was not well with woman's position ; and yet that they were neither so suppressed nor so docile as is generally supposed. If it was possible to represent women as conducting meetings, making public speeches or

* A religious festival in which women only participated, mentioned before.

† The dream reminds one of twentieth century Suffragist speeches !

‡ *Thesmophoriazusæ.*

openly rebelling, they must have been considered capable of doing such things, if they did not sometimes actually do them.

That there was some stir amongst women in the great fifth century* cannot be doubted from the indirect evidence forthcoming, given by dramatists, orators, philosophers, and in a recorded notable instance, woman herself. That in the intellectual and artistic life of Athens in the time of Pericles† woman took little overt share is also clear, but her position was not so abject as some writers have concluded. Her high qualities were appreciated.

"Yea, wisdom oft hath flowed from women's lips," says Theseus ;‡ Œdipus§ exclaims that beauty in a woman without nobility of mind is little worth, and Andromache‖ echoes the sentiment :

> ". . . woman, 'tis not beauty
> That witcheth bridegrooms, nay, but nobleness."

Further examination and consideration of the extant evidence will uphold the view that woman was not despised. The wife certainly had a status not satisfactory in our modern eyes, but that she was unhappy in general is far from sure.¶ Her husband often valued her highly and lamented her death if it occurred before his :

* B.C.

† 494–429 B.C.

‡ In *The Suppliants* of Euripides.

§ In the play of that name by Euripides.

‖ Euripides.

¶ An imaginative and earnest young suffragist once remarked, in surprise, to me : "Then you do not think that woman's history through the ages has been one long wail"! It is to be feared that passionate but indiscriminating upholders of women's "rights" often give that erroneous impression. But the human race has suffered and risen *as a whole*—the masculine and feminine together.

" Mine house is desolate, motherless my babes.
O my darling, my wife, thou art gone, thou art gone,
O best upon whom the light
Looketh down of the all-beholding sun,
Or the splendour of the star-eyed night."*

A worthy wife was appreciated, and the high joy of wedded love understood to some extent :

" When it befalls poor mortal men to love,
Should they find worthy objects for their loving,
Then is there nothing left of joy to long for."†

Although in Greek literature panegyrics on marriage are few, ‡ yet glimpses are given that indicate the existence of much married happiness. Menander's plays depict marriage for love as the common custom.§ But this was not based on equality between husband and wife, for submission was the part of the latter, willing on her side, and sometimes nobly given. Andromache proudly says ||

" Thou, O mine Hector, wast my fitting mate
In birth and wisdom, mighty in wealth and valour : "

even when she also describes her habit of schooling her heart and meeting her lord " with silent tongue, with quiet eye " ; and another woman ¶ says

" The wife should yield in all things to her lord,
If she be wise."

The wife's honour and happiness was thought to be best secured in the home, and a married woman of the upper classes in Athens seldom went out from

* Theseus in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides.
† Fragment of Euripides' *Andromeda*.
‡ As Farnell has noticed.
§ Menander lived 324–291 B.C.
|| In *The Daughters of Troy*, by Euripides.
¶ Electra.

it save to some religious festival or to a friend's house, although aristocratic ladies, such as Cimon's* sister Elpinice, were unrestrained and went where they pleased. In Sparta, also, the mistress of the house was of importance without, as well as within, the home, and appeared frequently in public. And everywhere the poorer women were forced to go out and to work, as they had no slaves, and the husband or father could not afford to treat them as richer women were indulged.† It is therefore probable that a greater knowledge of life and a greater common sense prevailed where the freedom was less restricted. But the better class woman indoors was mistress, and ruled the slaves: "Do we not wholly manage your domestic property for you?" asks Lysistrata. Iscomachus, instructing his fifteen-year-old wife in the duties of their house, opens a scene of harmony and mutual desire to please, where tyranny would be unknown; the husband promises that if she faithfully performs her duties he will himself be the first and most devoted of his wife's slaves.‡ Especially notable also is the prominence of women on tombs;§ representations of husband and wife together occur frequently and are a sign that the union was one of affection and not merely, as has been stated, to produce citizens for the state. A woman could obtain divorce, but in order to do so she had to appear in public at the law court and give evidence; in some cases this was sufficient to prevent application being made. The wife of Alcibiades, who had left him and sued

* Cimon was the son of Miltiades, the victor at Marathon, 490 B.C.

† Compare the custom in India.

‡ See the reported conversation of Socrates and Ischomachus, in Xenophon's *Æconomicus*.

§ E. A. Gardiner, *Ancient Athens*.

for a divorce, was seized by him and carried back when she appeared at the court !*

But the secluded life of the women, whose intercourse was chiefly with women slaves, and whose knowledge of the outer world was slight, could not make them *companions* to their husband, nor was that their aim. " My mother told me my only duty was to be modest," says his wife to Iscomachus ; and such an upbringing, in ignorance of all save household tasks, combined with the custom of youthful marriages for girls, and the inevitable contraction of mind due to the lack of interests, forbade comradeship or any kinship of spirit with men. But that womanhood as such was sacred to the Greeks is proved by many instances, of which one will serve : The Athenians ordered the massacre of a thousand men at Athens, the ringleaders of the revolt at Mitylene, but they received the complaint of two married women, prisoners of war, against the general Paches with so much indignation that, to avoid their sentence, he committed suicide in court.†

As the only type of woman usually considered in estimating the position of her sex is the wife, the idea has risen that woman was suppressed in Ancient Greece. But there were other women ; and these not all of a low type.

Demosthenes‡ makes the distinction thus :

> " We have companions for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, and wives that genuine children may be born to us, and that we may have a trustworthy guardian of our household property."§

* Related in Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades.*
† Recorded by J. P. Mahaffy, in *Social Life in Greece.*
‡ The greatest master of Greek prose. Lived 384–322 B.C.
§ In an oration against Neæra.

The concubines were slaves, and the fact of their existence was the real degradation to womanhood, as it was of manhood in the case of men slaves, but more especially does it appear in the former case.

An Athenian could not legally marry a woman of another state, and therefore many connections occurred where the children were illegitimate. Such *hetairæ* or companions exerted much influence in Athens, and were associated with openly by the greatest of citizens. The Greeks possessed no prudery in regard to sexual matters, recognising the naturalness of sex passion, but not recognising any necessity for restraint.* As has been remarked,† the "distinction between Greek civilisation and ours is not the fact itself but the light in which it was viewed," and openness is preferable. Therefore it was no shame for a man to live with a *hetaira* and the name itself was not a term of reproach. ‡ *Hetairæ* were often women accomplished and ambitious, belonging to another state, whom an Athenian could not marry; or they were Athenian women with a thirst for knowledge and for a more expanded life, and unable to endure the position of an Athenian wife. They associated frankly and publicly with the most brilliant men of the time, and many were each united to only one man with bonds of strongest affection. Aspasia of Miletus was as famous for her genius as her beauty; to her *salon* there came the greatest men of the time—Socrates, Phidias, Sophocles, and Euripedes; and it was probably her career that influenced the ideas of

* The great lesson of control and discipline was taught by the Catholic church. See the first chapter on Christianity.

† By G. Lowes Dickinson, in *The Greek View of Life*.

‡ For instance, a fragment of Sappho reads, "This will I now sing deftly to please my girl-friends," wherein the same word is used.

woman expressed by Plato * and pictured by Euripides. Not only was she consulted frequently on affairs of State by Pericles,† whom she loved, but she also instructed him in rhetoric, and helped to compose some of his most famous orations. It is therefore most unlikely that the sentiments put into the speech of Pericles by Thucydides were an expression of his opinion of woman :

> "A woman's highest glory is not to fall below the standard of such natural powers as she possesses : that woman is best of whom there is less talk among men, whether in the way of praise or blame."

To the man who loved and lived with Aspasia‡ such a speech would be impossible. So well known did her efforts to improve the position of women become, that men brought their wives to listen to her advice that they should cultivate their minds and take a more active share in the life of their city.§ Aspasia is reported to have introduced the religious worship of Asia Minor to the women of Athens,‖ and, sharing the opinions of the philosophers, to have opposed the popular ideas of the gods. Her enemies accused her of impiety, but Pericles by his eloquence and tears saved her at the trial. Such was a woman of profound influence in her time, more free than most, with high aims, insight and power.¶

Many other names are preserved of *hetairæ* who

* In his *Republic*, Book V.

† 494–429 B.C. He was virtual ruler of Athens, and encouraged all efforts to beautify the city and make it great.

‡ He had first divorced his wife by mutual consent, and when his two legitimate sons died, he was allowed, by special decree, to legitimise his son by Aspasia.

§ See Xenophon's *Æconomicus*.

‖ James Donaldson, in *Woman : Her Position in Ancient Greece*.

¶ Professor Geddes, in his *Masque of Ancient Learning*, makes her represent "Woman as inspirer of living thought and worthy deed, of artistic and civic achievement."

performed noteworthy deeds or were famed for their beauty and wit: Diotima is continually mentioned by Socrates, and he paid a charming visit to Theodota ;* Leæna died in torture rather than reveal a conspiracy of her lover, Harmodius ; Leontium was one of the most ardent disciples of Epicurus ; when Alcibiades fled Timandra went with him and performed the funeral rites over him ; the statue of Phryne the beautiful, carved in gold, was placed in the temple of Apollo at Delphi. During the invasion of Greece by Xerxes† the *hetairæ* offered public prayers and votive offerings for the safety of their country—a distinct mark of public spirit and patriotism. Corinth, however, was the only place where they played any part in the ritual of the State, and here, whenever prayers were offered to Aphrodite on matters of great import, as many *hetairæ* as possible were taken to aid in the prayer.‡ Special seats also were reserved for them in the theatres.§

One of the most remarkable evidences that womanhood had already evinced civic qualities which some were able to perceive is given by the brilliant speculator and philosopher Plato,‖ the forerunner of all who have dreamed of Utopias. He insisted on woman's *duty* and on what it lost through her restriction.¶ In his Symposium he speaks of the two kinds of love, the heavenly and the common, the former loving what is best in the beloved, and the latter merely desiring to gain an end. In thinking that if everyone found their true love the race would be

* Recorded by Xenophon.
† 480 B.C.
‡ Farnell, Book II.
§ See *The Attic Theatre*, by E. A. Haigh.
‖ 429–347 B.C.
¶ See *Morals in Evolution*, by L. T. Hobhouse.

happy,* he takes a natural view of human life and subordinates neither sex to the other. A few passages from his other writings will prove that he believed women to possess almost the same powers that the most advanced feminists claim for them. He made no assumption that one sex lacked this or that faculty, but thought Custom had made distinctions.† Girls and boys were to be educated alike both physically and mentally, for to him the different parts in the reproduction of the race played by men and women seemed to have no necessary connection with their relative ability to practise medicine or play the flute. He continues ‡

> " None of the occupations which comprehend the ordering of a State belong to woman as woman nor yet to man as man, but natural gifts are to be found here and there by both sexes alike, and so far as her nature is concerned, there is no difference in the natures of the man and the woman.§ . . . There are also some women who are fit and others who are unfit for the office of guardians. As far as the guardianship of the State is concerned there is no difference between the natures of the man and the woman, but only various degrees of strength and weakness. Thus we shall have to select duly qualified women also to share in the life and official labours of the duly qualified men, since we find that they are competent to the work and of kindred nature with the men. . . .
>
> " The sex which we keep in obscurity and domestic work, is it not fitted for nobler and more elevated functions ? Are there not instances of courage, wisdom, advance in all the arts ? "

Plato chose his pupils, as he taught gratuitously, and admitted women on terms of equality with men, in defiance of Athenian prejudice ; Laothinea of

* See *Ancient Ideals*, by H. O. Taylor.

† The question arises : *Why* and how did this custom originate ?

‡ In the *Republic*, Book V. He had advocated at first community of women, but later withdrew this proposal.

§ Twenty-five centuries later we make a more subtle distinction,

Mantinea, and Axiothea of Philious were two of the first women to be instructed by him.*

Aristotle,† on the other hand, did not allow his imagination to soar to possibilities and the future, but always kept to present facts, without seeing their tendencies to the extent that Plato's mind was able to discern them. Seeing the inferior position of the generality of women, Aristotle said ‡

> "The male is by nature superior and the female inferior; the one rules and the other is ruled . . . the inequality is permanent.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "The excellence of a female is (*a*) physical, a large and beautiful body, (*b*) mental, virtuous moderation, and a love—but not a sordid love—of work."

Rather as a chronicler than a prophet does he speak, but his balanced mind sees clearly.

In the realms of philosophy the names of some women are to be found: Periktione was a Pythagorean and wrote on the harmony of woman;§ thirty-four women distinguished themselves in that philosophy,‖ which was the most mystic of the Greek schools, and a few in other schools. Hypatia, who lived centuries later, was the last great teacher of Neo-Platonism, and gathered many disciples round her in Alexandria¶ when that city was the centre of learning.

In a different field also women took their share, and by officiating or assisting at the many religious festivals they unconsciously demonstrated that the

* Noted by K. J. Freeman, in *The Schools of Hellas*. He obtains his information from Diogenes Laertius, III, xxvi.

† 384–322 B.C.

‡ In his *Rhetoric*.

§ J. Donaldson.

‖ See *The Religion of Woman*, by Joseph McCabe.

¶ At the beginning of the fifth century A.D. She was barbarously murdered through the incitement of Christian priests in 415.

masculine alone could not complete ritual or worship. Without women the full compass of beauty and grace could not have been attained in the procession which formed a prominent feature of the Panathenæa, the most significant and important of the frequent Attic festivals.* Every section of free citizen was represented in this procession to the temple of the Pythian Apollo: old men with olive branches, middle-aged men carrying lance and shield, youths and boys singing, and girls selected for their beauty. In the midst was drawn a stately ship with a sail embroidered with representations of the actions of Athena, Jupiter, and the heroes and patriots of Athens. Aristophanes refers to this when he says: †

"Let us praise our famous fathers, let their glory be recorded
On Athene's mighty mantle consecrated and embroidered."

The object of this procession was to present to the patron goddess of Athens a *peplos*, or mantle, spread as the sail and woven by the women of the city. Contests followed—musical, gymnastic and dramatic—and at night the symbolic torch race was held. ‡ This procession forms the subject of the frieze of the Parthenon, a fact indicating its importance.

Ionian women attended the festival at Delos, but no woman was allowed to be present at the great Olympic contests, with the exception of the priestess of Demeter. This exclusion was probably a religious taboo instigated by the Pelasgians, and continued for the sake of decorum on account of the unclothed condition of the competitors. It is recorded that

* The Greeks had eighty festival days a year. See *Festivals, Games and Amusements*, by H. Smith.

† In *The Knights*.

‡ Professor Geddes has adapted this incident at the end of his *Masque of Learning*.

Pherenice, the mother of a young athlete, wished to see her son's victory, and disguised herself as a trainer. On the discovery of her sex she was forgiven because her father, brothers, and son were all Olympic victors.* For the chariot races at Olympia, however, women were allowed to enter their horses and to set up statues for their victories, and the names of many women are recorded : † Cynisca, sister of Ageselaus, of Sparta, won two victories in the chariot race‡ and a bronze representation of her horses was dedicated in the Heræum, while at Sparta a heroum was built in her honour. At the Heræa, which has already been mentioned, and which was probably the prototype of the Olympic games, women took the foremost place. The chorus of women in *Lysistratra* reveals the lifelong connection of a woman with religious rites :

> " For we, O all ye citizens, begin words serviceable to the state naturally since it reared me splendidly. As soon as I was seven years old I carried the mystic box in the procession ; and then when I was ten years old I ground the meal for our patron goddess§ ; and then wearing the saffron-coloured robe, I was Arctos at the Bauronian festival ; at length, when I became a beautiful girl, I carried the sacred basket."

As matrons, assisted by virgins, women alone partook of the ceremonies of the Thesmophoria mentioned before. Some remnant of the ancient times when agriculture was woman's share of labour, as hunting and fighting was man's, may have left its traces in this earth festival, but more especially was it a woman's ceremony on account of her life-producing and life-preserving powers :

* *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, by E. Norman Gardiner.

† *Ibid.* A long list is given.

‡ About 380 B.C. Men also usually had paid servants for their drivers and jockeys.

§ Artemis, to whom virgins were dedicated at the age of ten.

"In the ancient Greek celebration of the Thesmophoria the people symbolised the fertility and bounty of nature, manifested in the recurring springtides and harvests. Here was the very central principle of life to be worshipped, cherished, and beautified in rites and ceremonies fixed by immemorial usage. From this festival the men were excluded, not in pique against their sex (the Greeks had too much good humour for such stupidity), but in artistic recognition of the vital facts and intimate offices of the feminine constitution. Women represented the conservation and gracious protection of life and its children. So, when it came to embodying in dramatic forms the ideas of the splendid seed-receivings and gestations and fruitfulness of Mother Earth, women alone were enrolled in the festival which was as much civic in its motive and spirit as was legislation or the collection of taxes. Perhaps at bottom more so."*

Throughout centuries of Greek life this important festival exerted its twofold influence of calling attention to the basic foundation of life preservation through the fruitfulness of the earth, and of paying honour to women as mothers of the race.

There were no regular schools for girls at Athens, but they were trained in the practice of weaving, making men's and women's garments, cooking, and household management; the last implied, in well-to-do homes, the supervision of slaves, and in poorer ones the whole control of a house. Women also educated their own children up to the age of six or seven, and taught them fables, ballads, and the national mythology.† With the capacity to carry out these duties well, no woman could be called uneducated. Plato remarks

"As soon as the child understands what is said, the nurse and the mother . . . strive with one another in improving its character, in every word and deed showing

* F. J. Gould.
† See *The Schools of Hellas*, by K. J. Freeman.

what is just and what is unjust, what is beautiful and what is ugly, what is holy and what is unholy."

In Sparta girls shared in the gymnasia and musical training, and took part in contests of strength and speed, being exposed to dust and sun and toil,* the object of which was to develop brave, strong, resolute mothers. Girls took part in all physical exercises with boys, and even wrestled with them occasionally. Lampito, the Spartan woman in *Lysistrata*, ascribes her figure and complexion, when they are admired by her women friends, to her athletic training. All Spartan policy and education were directed to the production of strong citizens, and therefore a woman is sometimes found with two husbands when the first was old or infirm, in order that she may produce fine children, but only exceptionally were there men with two wives. Adultery was practically unknown ; when a citizen of Sparta was asked how adulterers were punished he replied that there were none. Aristotle remarks on the fact that, in his time,† about two-fifths of the land in Sparta was in the hands of women, and it was considered, at Athens, that Spartan women ruled the men.‡ When Gorgo, the wife of Leonidas, was taunted with this fact and it was pointed out that the women of no other Greek state did so, she answered : " We are the only women that bear men." Plutarch mentions§ the high value placed by the men of Sparta on the praise of women :

" By reciting verses written in praise of the deserving they kindled a wonderful emulation and thirst for distinction

* Cicero notices this.

† Fourth century B.C.

‡ There is a good chapter on the Women of Sparta in Donaldson's *Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome and among the Early Christians.*

§ In his *Life of Lykurgus*, which gives an account of Spartan women.

in the young men; for he who had been praised by the maidens for his valour went away congratulated by his friends; while, on the other hand, the raillery which they used in sport and jest had as keen an edge as a serious reproof."

Spartan girls mixed freely with young men before marriage, especially in connection with sports. In other Dorian states feminine athletics were encouraged to some extent, but in none so much as at Sparta. In Argos there were foot-races for girls, and in Chios they participated in wrestling matches. Especially in Sparta priestesses were honoured, and, with men who had fallen in war, were the only people allowed to have their names inscribed on their tombs.* The oracle at Delphi was a woman,† and, though probably her utterances were inspired by a committee of priests, yet the feminine was recognised as near to the unseen wisdom, and her influence over the nation was incalculable.

However, by the fourth century B.C. when Greece fell before Alexander, himself the son of a worthy mother—" the fierce, virile and indomitable Olympia " —the women in general were estimated at a lower level than before the outburst of genius in the Periclean Age. It has been sometimes supposed that the downfall of Greece was partly due to the enervated womanhood,‡ and that womanhood was depreciated through the prevalent sex-perversion in the form of intermale connection. Lack of intellectual companionship with women would encourage this supposedly widespread tendency that was reflected even among the

* Plutarch, *Life of Lykurgus.*

† The Pythoness. The oracle was established by 900 B.C. She is quoted throughout the History of Herodotus.

‡ See Olive Schreiner's *Woman and Labour*, Chapter II. The fall was more probably due to the lack of cohesion between the States.

gods, when Zeus obtained Ganymedes in the place of Hebe as his cupbearer and associate. It is possible, however, that instances of men's passion for one of their own sex were less numerous than might appear, for both in past and present times the exceptions to normal behaviour are recorded,* and the great average is unchronicled.

From the writings of Plutarch† can be gathered comparisons between the Athenian and Spartan attitude towards women, but there is no sign that the people of Bæotia or Attica approved or adopted the freedom of the women of Sparta; though contact with Rome effected what the example nearer at hand failed to do. In his own time Plutarch unconsciously pictures an improved condition of the better-class woman; his own wife paid visits and received guests even in his absence and joined in all his public interests,‡ while in his letter to her on the death of their little daughter, he expresses his trust in her judgment, and affectionately endeavours to comfort her with various reflections that include a reminder of the knowledge they have each gained by their initiation into the mysteries of Dionysus.§ A beautiful picture of wedded happiness is brought before the mind by the story of their pilgrimage to Mount Helicon, where they made a sacrifice to Love and prayed that their affection for one another might never diminish. In

* The chief authority is Athenæus, Book XIII, but the literature of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. contains allusions throughout. See Plato's *Banquet* especially.

† *Circa* 54–117 A.D.

‡ J. P. Mahaffy, in *The Silver Age of the Greek World.*

§ The Athenians celebrated a feast yearly to Ceres and her daughter Proserpine, at which initiations into the Eleusinian mysteries took place. Herodotus mentions the custom in Book VIII, 65. The mystic hymn to Dionysus was sung at the rites.

the charming *Conjugal Precepts** which Plutarch sends to a young married couple occurs the phrase: "as you are both well versed in philosophy"; this throws a light on woman's education, and throughout his *Moralia*, whenever he touches on the subject of marriage, is gained the impression of happy unions—not of equality, for the wife is submissive to the husband, though in no sense his chattel:

> "As where two voices are in unison the loudest prevails; so in a well-managed household everything is done by mutual consent, but the husband's supremacy is exhibited and his wishes are consulted.† . . . But the husband ought to rule his wife, not as a master does his chattel, but as the soul governs the body, by sympathy and goodwill. As he ought to govern the body by not being a slave to its pleasures and desires, so he ought to rule his wife by cheerfulness and complaisance."

Such were the ideals of the ordinary Greek marriage, not the highest, yet able to produce happiness if followed. And Plutarch also remarks

> "Plato says that is a happy and fortunate State where the words *meum* and *tuum* are least heard, because the citizens regard the common interest in all matters of importance . . . so is it good for husband and wife to mutually sympathise with one another, that just as the strength of ropes comes from the twining and interlacing of ropes together, so the marriage knot may be confirmed and strengthened by the interchange of mutual affection and kindness. Nature itself teaches this by the birth of children, which are so much a joint result that neither husband nor wife can discriminate or discern which part of the child is theirs. So, too, it is well for married persons to have one purse, and to throw all their property into one common stock that here also there may be no *meum* and *tuum*."‡

* Jeremy Taylor gleaned much from the *Conjugal Precepts* for his *Marriage Ring*.

† Nearly nineteen centuries later Thomas Carlyle said the same in a letter to Jane Welsh during their engagement.

‡ The translation is by A. R. Shilleto.

And since Plutarch typifies the best in Greek life, it is fitting that this section should close with his kindly wish at the beginning of the letter to his young friends :

"And though in philosophy there are many goodly subjects, yet is there none more worthy of attention than that of marriage, on which subject philosophy spreads a charm over those who are to pass their life together, and makes them gentle and mild to one another. I send, therefore, a summary of what you have often heard,* as you are both well-versed in philosophy, arranging my matter in a series of short observations that it may be more easily remembered, and I pray that the muses will assist and co-operate with Aphrodite, so that no lyre nor lute could be more harmonious or in time than your married life, as a result of philosophy and concord."

* This shows that the ideas were widespread and not the opinions of an isolated moralist.

CHAPTER IX

ROME

The Roman matron a typical and significant figure.—Etruria and its civilisation—ancient goddesses, tombs.—Early Roman legends—the Sabine women, Egeria, Lucretia, Virginia.—The home as centre of worship.—Vesta the hearth goddess, Vestal virgins, their duties and privileges.—Juno, her temples, etc., Minerva, Diana and other goddesses.—The Roman calendar.—Sibylline books.—Worship of Dionysus by women.—Cato's utterances against women—their storming of the senate.—Cornelia and her children.—Hortensia.—Famous women in the first century B.C.—Inscriptions—the *Laudatio Turia*.—Forms of marriage and divorce.—Poets of the Republic and their evidence.—The age of Augustus—his women relatives—attempts to strengthen marriage ties and raise ideals—revival of processions and worship.—Virgil's small insight into womanhood.—Ovid's "Heroines."—Seneca's praise of women—his pictures more reliable than those of the satirists.—Pliny's letters to his wife.—Other writers.—Inscriptions in Roman towns.—Freedwomen and their vocations.—Worship of Magna Mater and of Isis—that of latter throughout Roman Empire—prayers addressed to her.—The merging of Roman religion with Christianity and woman's position during the transition. No definite break.—Catholicism built upon and transformed what the past gave to it.

THE Roman matron is a typical and significant figure. Her dignity and assurance, her scorn of lesser people, combined with a certain ability to associate with them, and her far-reaching influence, are each qualities that the Empire to which she belonged also evinced. The Mother of Nations is symbolised in one of her own citizen-mothers. But

such a figure could no more develop spontaneously than did the Roman Empire itself; both were the result of slow growth and the product of many vicissitudes; and the beginnings of each are found in times earlier than the beginnings of Rome.

Etruria, with its curious, little-known civilisation, gave to Rome many of its political, social, and religious institutions, and among them was the habit of honouring women, both in their idealised form as goddesses, and in their daily human life. Shrines, tombs and frescoes tell the tale plainly, and disclose a position for woman analogous to that held by her in the early days of Crete. Of the three great Etruscan deities two were goddesses: Menrva or Menerva,* and Thalna or Cupra† to whom were dedicated shrines at Veii and Falerii. The twelve lesser deities consisted of six of each sex, among who were Lasa, the goddess of fate, represented with a stylus and tablet or hammer and nail, writing or fixing her decrees, and Voltumna, the noble goddess at whose shrine the princes of Etruria held their councils. Both goddesses thus symbolised woman's share in the destinies and politics of mankind. A representation of the King and Queen of Hades enthroned and conversing together‡ depicts equality between man and woman, as does the custom of children taking their mother's as well as their father's name. In frescoes of feasts women are constantly seen at the board by their husband's sides, and at sacrifices men and women together officiated. Tombs of women are in general more highly ornamented and richly furnished than those of men.§

* The Minerva of Rome.
† Probably the Roman Juno.
‡ In the Tomba Golini at Orvieto.
§ See *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, Vol. II, by George Dennis.

Better-class Etruscan women were educated and accomplished; sometimes they were instructed in the mysteries of divination. Tanaquil,* the wife of Tarquinius Priscus, was versed in mathematics and medicine, as well as being an industrious housewife and great spinner of wool. Begoë wrote on the art of divination, and is a traditional figure in Etruscan history.

Mainly through the Etruscan dynasty at Rome the customs of the northern land were adopted, but anterior to this period legends tell of women's influence. The feast known as the Matronalia was held to have been established in the honour of the Sabine women, who, after settling down with their husbands, prevented their fathers from taking revenge for the theft of Roman women for wives. They established peace, begging the men not to leave them fatherless or widows, and thus on that feast-day wives receive presents from their husbands, and girls from their lovers. An indication is here seen of the recognition of woman's preference for peace rather than war. Numa Pompilius, the legendary king, visited a nymph, Egeria, who gave him advice regarding his kingdom and directions for establishing ritual and divine worship. Not always was the influence of women for good, and Tullia, daughter of Servius and wife of Tarquin, urges her husband to seize the throne from her father.† A different type is Lucretia, upon whom Sextus " wrought the deed of shame," and who cannot survive the loss of her wifely honour. That women were considered peculiarly akin to unseen powers appears in the legend of Amalthea, the Sybil of Cumae,

* Pliny and Livy both mention her.
† Lady Macbeth is of her type.

and her books, the influence of which spreads through Roman history for centuries, whether their existence was mythical or not. In war also woman's force was felt, as when Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus, with his wife Valeria, persuaded him to forgo his attack on Rome and make peace. He says *

> " . . . Ladies, you deserve
> To have a temple built you : all the swords
> In Italy, and her confederate arms,
> Could not have made this peace."†

Very different from this picture of a proud patriot mother is the one seen in the tragedy of Virginia, when

> " With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
> Forth she went bounding to the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm."‡

At this period it was the custom for parents of moderate means to combine together and hire a schoolroom and a teacher to instruct boys and girls,§ and Virginia probably went to such a school.‖

Though these stories are¶ related of times before the Gallic invasion when all records and documents were destroyed, yet, whether true in detail or not, they reflect the attitude taken towards women, and the characteristics exhibited by them. Egeria, with her wisdom, Lucretia in her outraged feeling, the schoolgirl Virginia, and the rest, each represent hundreds of others whose names are unknown.

From the earliest times the home, and there is no

* 488 B.C.

† Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act V, Scene III.

‡ Macaulay's *Virginia*. The incident is placed in 449 B.C.

§ See E. A. Hecker's *History of Women's Rights*.

‖ Livy (III, 44) says : " Virgini, venienti in forum (ibi namque in tabernis literarum ludi erant). . . ."

¶ They are well told in A. Gilman's *Rome* (" Story of the Nations " Series).

home without a woman, was a kind of temple, the dwelling-place of divine as well as human beings; as friends and co-habitants they lived together. The primitive gods (*numina*) were conceived as a force or spirit rather than a personality; they had no human form and no human characteristics. Early Romans, destitute of mythological fancy, invented no stories of their gods as did the Greeks. Their earliest divinities were not married and had no children, and were considered as male or female, according to their qualities and sphere of operations. By the exercise of their powers only was their existence betrayed.* Hence Vesta, the hearth goddess, was the spirit of the fire, as Penates was that of the household store. Religious duties were carried on in the house, which thus assumed a sacred character, and added dignity to the mistress of the home. Vesta is said to be "the only female deity among the highest gods of the most ancient state," † and she formed the religious centre of the house—an expression of woman's queenship of the home. In early times one fire was kept always burning in each settlement, and it was the duty of the chief's sons to kindle it and of his daughters to tend it. Therefore the origin of the worship of Vesta was closely connected with the duties and dangers of daily life, and, based on these simple material processes, there arose a cult that permeated the life of the State. The Flamens and Vestal Virgins, of historic time, are the spiritual descendants of the ancient kings' sons and daughters. The six Vestal Virgins ‡ renewed the

* *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, by W. Warde Fowler.
† *Ibid.* Quoted from Wissowa.
‡ Their duties were very complicated and each Vestal was bound for thirty years. During the first ten they learnt their duties, during the next ten they performed the offices, and during the last ten they taught novices. See Boissier's *Rome and Pompeii*.

sacred fire of Vesta on the Roman New Year's Day, March 1st,* and in June they cleansed the Penus Vestae—a Holy of Holies of the Roman State, recalling the agricultural stores of the primitive Latin home—and made it ready for the reception of the first fruits at the Vestalia. During the preceding month they were engaged in preparing the salt-cakes for use at this festival.

> "These and other simple duties of the Vestals, all of them traceable to the old life on the farm, together with their sex and maidenhood, preserved this beautiful cult throughout Roman history from all contamination. Vesta, in her *aedes*, a round dwelling which was never a temple in the technical sense, was represented by no statue, and her title of Mater never suggested to the true Roman worshipper anything but her motherly grace and beneficence. Far more than any other cult, that of Vesta represents the continuity of Roman religious feeling, and the remains of her latest dwelling, and the statues of her priestesses, with no statue of herself among them, may give the visitor to the forum some dim idea of the spirit of Roman worship."†

Certain magical powers were ascribed to the Vestals, and many ceremonies could be performed only by them. On May 15th a procession was formed, including the magistrates and pontifices, and twenty-seven straw puppets were cast into the Tiber by the State priestesses. The Flaminica Dialis, who assisted her husband in the cult of Jupiter, was also present, and the object of the whole ceremony may have been to procure rain by means of magic, though some have thought it was a relic of human sacrifice.

Of interest is the fact that the Flamen Dialis was bound to vacate his priesthood on the death of his

* J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, Vol. III, Chapter IV.

† W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, Chapter VI. Descriptions of the temple of Vesta, and the house of Vestals, with plans, are to be found in Gaston Boissier's *Rome and Pompeii*.

wife the Flaminica.* This seems to indicate that at one time the priestess was the most important functionary of the two, and that originally her husband only held office in virtue of his marriage with her. The highest reverence was paid to Vestal Virgins, and in some respects they were above the Consul and other important officials. They banqueted with the Pontifices,† and viewed the public games with the Empress. The persons of both Vestals and Flamens were inviolable, and they had the right of asylum within their dwelling-place.‡ If a criminal, on his way to punishment, met a Vestal, he could not be executed or scourged that day.§ Unchaste Vestals were punished by death, but they were buried alive, probably because they were so sacred that it was unlawful to lay violent hands on them. ‖ On the base of the statues erected in memory of certain Vestals can be seen inscriptions which testify to the honour accorded to them ; one was renowned for her " wonderful learning " ; others had statues dedicated to them in gratitude for assistance or for appointment to various posts ; and another's laudation reads : " She surpasses all women that have gone before her in devotion and goodness."

Next to Vesta in antiquity among Roman goddesses were two who, together with Jupiter, were adopted from Etruria ; the great temple on the Capitol was dedicated¶ to the Etruscan trias, Jupiter, Juno and

* See J. G. Frazer's *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Chapter III, where explanations, dependent on the pre-eminence of Diana, are suggested.

† The most illustrious of the Colleges of Roman Priests.

‡ See *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, by W. Warde Fowler.

§ *Roman Public Life*, by A. H. J. Greenidge.

‖ This reason is suggested by Plutarch. See Lecky's *History o European Morals*, Vol. II.

¶ In 509 B.C.

Minerva. This temple became the centre of Roman worship, and in it was deposited the legendary Sibylline books,* which had so marked an influence on the character of Roman religion, through their oracles. Later on, temples to Juno alone were established, and the removal of the cult of Juno Regina from Veii indicates the importance assumed by the goddess. Some of her shrines became practically registration offices where fees and names could be given for marriage.†

Whether Juno belonged to the early class of the *numina* or forces is not clear, but she represented the female principle in life, as Hercules represented the male,‡ and was essentially the women's divinity. To her the Kalends§ of every month were sacred, and to her prayers were offered at times of peril. In the Punic War‖ when Hasdrubal was known to be coming, processions of maidens to the temple of Juno chanted songs to secure the *pax deorum*, and the matrons living within ten miles of the city of Rome were authorised to contribute towards a gift for her temple.¶ The festival was organised partly in order to keep the women in touch with the religion of the State; their participation in religious ceremonies was a remarkable feature of Roman worship. Virgil, in the Æneid, acknowledges the prominent part taken in human affairs by women, in the predominance given to Juno's influence throughout the poem. Her animus against Troy causes Æneas' misfortunes, and she

* What the "books" were is uncertain; probably some collection of writings with special interpreters attached to the temple.

† See Mommsen's *History of Rome*, Book V, Chapter XVII.

‡ Women were excluded from the worship of Hercules, and not allowed to swear by that god, and they were also forbidden to be present at certain rites of the farm.

§ The first day of the month.

‖ Third century B.C.

¶ W. Warde Fowler.

commands all to her will. The god of the winds, Æolus, says to her

> " Thy work, O Queen, is to discover what thou choosest; it is my duty with zeal to perform what thou dost command. Thy gift to me is all this kingdom which I have, and this my sceptre; thou makest Jove my friend, thou grantest me a seat at the feast of the gods and causest me to be lord of storms and tempests."*

A picture is drawn of the ruling of mortals by Jupiter and Juno together which reflects the ruling of a household by husband and wife with mutual concession. The occasion is the final fight between Æneas and Turnus :

> " Meanwhile the sovereign of immense Olympus addresses Juno, as from a yellow cloud she viewed the fight: 'Consort, when shall this strife be at an end? What further enterprise remains? . . . What then do you propose, or with what view are you hovering in the cold clouds? . . . Now at length desist and be swayed by my entreaty. . . .' "†

Juno agrees that the combat shall cease, but desires a compromise in the fate dealt to the Trojans To this Jove agrees :

> " I grant what you desire; I am subdued and willingly myself resign."

Minerva‡ also later on possessed a temple of her own on the Aventine, which became the religious centre of the trade guilds, and her arrival from Southern Etruria marks the growth of town life, improvement in various manufactures, and the use of better materials and better methods. As patroness of different crafts, she would be regarded as encouraging

* *Æneid*, Book I. Translation by Lonsdale and Lee.
† *Æneid*, Book XII.
‡ The days associated with her were March 18th to 23rd.

all good work, and Industry, on which civilisation is based, received her beneficent approval. In some respects her characteristics resemble those of the Greek Athene, who possessed the attribute of wisdom; and to the Roman Minerva young scholars addressed prayers for success and fame.

Not importations, but goddesses of Roman foundation were Ceres, Fortuna, Diana and Mater Matuta. April marked the ceremonies to Ceres, the deity presiding over the generative powers of nature, and she originally received a sacrifice made by the Virgo Vestalis Maxima, under her name of Tellus or Terra Mater, and, alone among the early *numina*, was personified as the Earth. Her worshippers touched the ground when her name was mentioned, as they held them to the sky when calling on Jupiter. Offerings were made to Mother Earth before harvest; in her embrace the body was laid at death; and to her, as well as to Diana, were hymns sung by choirs of boys and girls in the processions from the Palatine to the Capitol.*

Diana, worshipped as a wood or tree spirit, and having some relation to the moon, was later identified with the Greek Artemis, but in Rome she was chiefly honoured as forwarding civilisation by her power of uniting communities in friendship, an aspect that brings to mind the reconciling action of the Sabine women. Catullus† addresses her thus:

> "Thou, goddess, measurest out by monthly course the circuit of the year, thou fillest full with goodly fruits the rustic home of husbandmen. Be thou hallowed by whatever name thou wilt; and, as of old, thou wert wont with good help, keep safe the race of Romulus."

* W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, Chapters VI and XI.

† Gaius Valerius Catullus, born 84 B.C.

Her temple on the Aventine was an asylum for runaway or criminal slaves, and her feast day* was a holiday for slaves; therefore Diana was much beloved by emancipated slaves. They looked upon Feronia as their protectress also; at Terracina the temple of this goddess was specially devoted to the manumission of slaves; and Roman freedwomen collected a sum of money as a present to Feronia.† Open to slaves also was the festival of Fortuna,‡ to whom three temples in Rome were dedicated. The Plebs participated in this festival, and Fortuna received the special devotion of mothers, who predominated at her rites. Mothers again paid homage to the widely worshipped Mater Matuta, that ancient deity of matrons, presiding over the dawn of day and the dawn of life at childbirth. None but wives of a first marriage could deck the image of this goddess; and women only had access to the temple of Carmenta,§ another birth-goddess, in whose hands lay the gift of prophecy. On May Day was celebrated the dedication of the Bona Dea, whose temple was cared for, and whose cult was exercised by women only;‖ and the lead in the worship was taken by the wife of the Pontifex Maximus.¶ Later in the year, in December, there was the Women's Sacrifice to the same goddess, attended by the Vestal Virgins, and recognised as a State function *pro populo Romano*. For a man to enter upon these mysteries was to run the risk of death,

* August 13th.
† In 217 B.C.
‡ On June 24th.
§ Plutarch says that women had themselves built one of her temples.
‖ Just as that of Hercules was exclusively for men.
¶ The chief pontiff, who held his position for life and could not leave Italy. The Papacy was the subsequent equivalent office.

so exclusive and important to the welfare of the State were they. Disguised as a woman, Publius Clodius Pulcher entered Cæsar's house during the ceremony and was discovered; and so serious was this offence that he was tried for the impiety, was almost convicted, but escaped by bribery.

Handmaids were not forgotten and the calendar gives them a day* of rejoicing known as the Ancillarum Feriae when sacrifices were made to the god of harvest. But more alien to modern ideas was a prostitute's feast day,† indicating that with the *naïveté* of a younger people there went the honesty to acknowledge their debt to some who, though despised, are not rejected of men. And the relation of prostitution to religion is a subtle one reaching to the inmost springs of man's being. Degenerating undoubtedly to the vulgar and objectionable, this feast-day was based on a feeling of honour to woman in a similar way that the temple prostitution of India and Judaism brought the fulfilling of men's need within the sphere of religion. But both these expedients left the intercourse to the mere physique of sex, and not until, both openly and secretly,‡ the union is one of mind and spirit as well as body, will womanhood as such be adequately honoured, or manhood reach its full possibilities of happiness in the sexual sphere. For sex can be made a sacrament to a greater degree than bread and wine, since two are concerned in its participation; and some glimmer of this truth may have reached those who first lifted the physical instinct into the realm of spirit and religion.

* July 7th.
† April 28th.
‡ The modern world also makes use of prostitution, but it hides the fact more.

A goddess introduced at a time of peril was the Magna Mater or Cybele. During the Punic wars, after consultation of the "Sibylline Books" priests foretold that Hannibal would leave Italy if this deity was brought to Rome. The originator of the idea is unknown and Romans were ignorant of her cult, but when the oracle at Delphi repeated the advice, and Scipio,* that "strange soldier mystic," upheld it, the introduction, with much solemnity, was brought about. With the consent of the King of Pergamus, the sacred black stone of Magna Mater came to Italy from Pessimus in Phrygia,† and was received by Scipio and Roman matrons, who carried it in turns, with homage and incense, through crowds of citizens, to the temple of Victory on the Palatine. The anniversary of that day‡ was henceforth a festival called the Megalesia, and money was coined in honour of the goddess, the first one of Oriental origin introduced to Rome, and the last summoned by the "Sibylline books."§

Dionysus was a Greek importation into Etruria, whence the cult spread to Rome,‖ where it started with a small association of initiated women, who met openly in the day-time three times a year. A priestess from the Campagnia, however, instituted meetings at night, said to be accompanied by various excesses, and attended by many young women of noble family. Their religious ecstasy was not pleasing to the minds of the older type of Roman, and the worshippers were accused of practising rites dangerous

* Publius Scipio Africanus, who later defeated Hannibal at Zama in 202 B.C.

† In 204 B.C.

‡ April 4th.

§ In the Vatican can be seen the bas-relief of one of her priestesses.

‖ In 186 B.C.

to the State and to morality, and they were forbidden to continue. Religious enthusiasm caused many women to claim the right of worshipping whom and how they wished. Conventionality and law were broken through, and therefore persecution followed on the discovery of Bacchanalia held in secret. Probably the report of the immorality, practised at Dionysiac ceremonies, was exaggerated by such as Cato, who disliked the prominence of women in a ritual that made a special appeal to the feminine temperament through its intensity and abandonment.*

Cato† was destined to be further incensed with women's actions. He remarked that had there been "no woman in the world the gods would still have been dwelling with us," and confessed his subjugation, if illogically, by exclaiming :

> "All men rule over all women, we Romans rule over all men, and our wives rule over us."‡

His ire was raised at the repeal of a sumptuary law§ which had been passed during the Punic wars, and which forbade woman to wear more than a certain amount of gold, or to use carriages, and imposed other restrictions on the rich in order to pay for the cost of the war ; when a repeal was being considered after the time of stress was over, women thronged to the Senate to canvass for votes. Cato opposed the repeal expressing ideas not unfamiliar in the twentieth century :‖

* Some account of the worship of Dionysus at Rome is found in W. Warde Fowler's *Religious Experience of the Roman People*, Chapter XV. Donaldson thinks that the immorality was grossly misrepresented. See *Woman : Her Position in Ancient Greece and Rome*.

† Marcus Porcius Cato, the great Censor, B.C. 234–149.

‡ Reported by Plutarch in his life of Cato the Elder.

§ The Oppian Law.

‖ Reported by Livy.

"The privileges of men are now spurned and trodden underfoot, and we who have shown that we are unable to stand against the women separately, are now utterly powerless against them as a body. Their behaviour is outrageous. I was filled with painful emotions of shame as I just now made my way into the forum through the midst of a body of women. . . . The moment they have arrived at equality with you, they will have become your superiors. . . ."

Lucius Valerius, who was urging the repeal, referred to Cato's book, *Origines*, in which it was clear that in olden times women had appeared in public with good effect :

"Who rushed into the forum in the days of Romulus and stopped the fight with the Sabines ? Who went out and turned back the army of the great Coriolanus ? Who brought their gold and jewels into the forum when the Gauls demanded a great ransom for the city ? Who went out to the seashore during the late war to receive the Idæan mother* when new gods were invited hither to relieve our distresses ? Who poured out their riches to supply a depleted treasury during the same war ? Was it not the Roman matrons ? Masters do not disdain to listen to the prayers of their slaves, and we are asked, forsooth, to shut our ears to the petitions of our wives. . . ."

Cato gave way, and the law was repealed.

One of the noblest figures in the annals of the womanhood of Rome is that of Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio, and mother of the Gracchii. After her husband's death, she was courted by many, but refused every suitor in order to give herself up to the education of her two sons, her "jewels." At a time when self-seeking was a chief motive in political life in Rome, she urged her sons, Tiberius and Gaius, to do some great work for their state and to alleviate the wrongs of the plebs ; by her inspiration they attempted reforms

* Magna Mater, or Cybele.

and upheld the ideal of the common weal.* No better example could be found of the noble Roman matron.†

As mistress of the household, the matron dined with her husband, received his and her own friends at home, and walked freely out of doors. A *conventus matronorum* was established with a meeting house on the Quirinal where discussion of affairs took place,‡ and many other women's clubs—social and religious—bear witness to their public spirit and influence. At the games and spectacles, too, women assembled together with men, though in later years Augustus set apart the upper seats for the better class women, leaving, however, the common people to mix freely.

In June the feast of the Matralia was celebrated by mothers to impress upon themselves their duties towards their children, of whom they had exclusive charge until the age of seven ; they also had much to say as to the ordering of their lives afterwards, although *legally* the children belonged to the father only ;§ the Matronalia has already been mentioned as a festival dedicated to the memory of the Sabine women who made peace between their husbands and fathers. A modern touch is noticed in the speech made by Hortensia‖ to the tribunal of triumvirs in the forum, when a body of women entered it on the occasion of a tax being levied on rich women's property to provide money for the war against Brutus and Cassius :

* In 131 B.C. Tiberius Gracchus introduced his Agrarian Law. In 123 B.C. Gaius Gracchus organised the production, transport, warehousing, and finance of corn.

† For an illuminating and living account of the various types of Roman matrons see T. G. Tucker's *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul,* Chapter XVI.

‡ *The Religion of Woman,* by Joseph McCabe.

§ As they do in England to-day, but legality in such cases is comparatively ineffective.

‖ The daughter of Hortensius, a contemporary of Cicero.

> "Why should we pay taxes when we have no part in the honours, the commands, the statecraft for which you contend? Because it is a time of war, you say? Let war with the Gauls or Parthians come, and we shall not be inferior to our mothers in zeal for the common safety; but for civil wars may we never contribute."

In connection with this entry into politics may be noted the discovery, on some walls in Pompeii, of election addresses signed by women in favour of particular candidates.

Many names of famous women occur in the annals of the first century B.C. Not as famous in herself, but as a proof that her husband valued her more than political safety at the time, may be cited Cornelia, the daughter of Marius, and first wife of Julius Cæsar, whom he refused to put away at the bidding of Sulla. Julia, the daughter of Cæsar and wife of Pompey, through her prudence preserved friendship between the two men during her lifetime. Cicero in a letter to his friend Atticus, relates an interview with Brutus and Cassius at which were present three women—Servilia, the mother of Brutus, Tertulla, the wife of Cassius and sister of Brutus, and Porcia, the wife of Brutus and daughter of Cato. Plutarch called Porcia "a philosopher full of spirit and good sense." Cicero mourned deeply for the death of his beloved daughter, Tullia,* and lived several weeks alone, refusing to see even his wife. In his letters to Atticus, he expresses his thought that she survives as a divine being, and his wish to honour her as a guardian spirit. A most significant discovery is that on the wall of a tomb where a husband tells his wife's story after forty-one years of happy married life. The praise† is addressed to

* In 45 B.C.

† Known as the *Laudatio Turia*.

the wife herself, and is supposed to have been composed by Lucretius Vespillo, though names matter little here, as the record can stand for many other marriages as harmonious and as worthy if less articulate. Turia's high courage in difficulties,* her devotion to her husband, and her management of their property in peace and danger are all recounted.† But the one drawback to complete happiness was lack of children, and that her husband might have an heir, Turia actually offered to divorce herself, and live as his sister, giving him her affection and property, while another wife bore him children. His answer was equal in love and loyalty to her request :

> " I must confess that the anger so burnt in me that my senses almost deserted me : that you should ever have thought it possible that we could be separated but by death was most horrible to me. What was the need of children compared to my loyalty to you : why should I exchange certain happiness for an uncertain future ? But I say no more of this : you remained with me, for I could not yield without disgrace to myself and unhappiness to both of us. The one sorrow that was in store for me was that I was destined to survive you. . . .
>
> " You were a faithful wife to me . . . you were kind and gracious, sociable and friendly : you were assiduous at your spinning : you followed the religious rites of your family and your state, and admitted no foreign cults or superstition : you did not dress conspicuously nor seek to make a display in your household arrangements. Your duty to our whole household was exemplary : you tended my mother as carefully as if she had been your own. You had innumerable other excellences in common with all other worthy matrons, but these I have mentioned were peculiarly yours. . . ."

It would have been interesting to see Turia's eulogy of her husband !

* She lived in the troubled times of the Civil Wars in the first century and died in 8 B.C.

† The story is given in full in *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, by W. Warde Fowler.

Further evidence of appreciation and praise can be found on other tombstones of wives and mothers :*

(*a*) " All the greater renown has my dearest mother won, who has equalled and in no way fallen behind other women in modesty, rectitude, chastity, obedience, household work, carefulness, and loyalty."

(*b*) " She was of pleasant address and noble of gait ; she took care of her house, and span."

(*c*) " Never have I experienced a pain from thee, except through thy death."

It was also the custom to pronounce a funeral eulogy publicly over a dead woman as freely as over a dead man, and Plutarch commends the practice. Julius Cæsar pronounced such a eulogy on his aunt, the wife of Marius.

The *Laudatio Turia* introduces two points in Roman law concerning wives : the first, at the beginning of the story, is in connection with a lawsuit whereby Turia's relations endeavoured to prove void her father's will, which left his property jointly to her and her husband. When a woman of property married, her estate could pass into the hands of her husband or could remain in the care of her father or guardians ; she could thus be legally independent of her husband, and, when she had left her father's home, she was practically independent of him. A Roman woman could acquire property and inherit money equally with a man, and the necessity for a law† which made it illegal to leave more than a certain amount to a woman and forbade leaving more to an heiress than to an heir, gives an indication of what had been happening.

The second point in the *Laudatio Turia* is the

* The extracts which follow are taken from Hobhouse's *Morals in Evolution.*

† The *Lex Voconia*, passed in 169 B.C.

question of divorce: in the earliest times divorce was very infrequent, and the husband had the power of putting an unfaithful wife to death. But near the end of the Republic divorce "stood freely at the choice of either party;"* husband or wife might dissolve the marriage with legal form—usually this was done after the advice of near relatives had been considered, and the consent of both husband and wife was necessary when there was no adultery or crime. The extraordinary case of Cato is often quoted: Hortensius wished to marry Cato's daughter, but the father refused, and, as he wished for the friendship of Hortensius, he offered his own wife, Marcia, from whom he was estranged, if her father consented. He did so and Marcia married Hortensius, and on his death she was remarried to Cato. Marcia's comments are not recorded! This however, was an extreme case and in general marriage was regarded as a lifelong partnership in which the wife had no rival in the form of a concubine. She was more fully her own mistress than any married woman of an earlier civilisation, with the exception of a certain period of Egyptian history. Roman law defined marriage as "the union of a man and a woman and a partnership of all life; a mutual sharing of laws human and divine."† The formula used in marriage was "*Ubi tu Gaius, ego Gaia,*" (Where you are master, I am mistress).

Confarreatio was the oldest form of marriage ceremony‡ when both bride and bridegroom in the

* *Morals in Evolution,* by L. T. Hobhouse.

† See E. A. Hecker's *History of Women's Rights.*

‡ It may be noted that modern European marriage forms are based on: (*a*) Roman Law; (*b*) Primitive Teutonic custom; (*c*) Christian doctrine; and that, as D. G. Ritchie says in *Natural Rights,* "Monogamy has come to us as a Roman, not as a distinctively Christian institution."

presence of the highest religious authority of the State, partook of a sacred cake made of *far* and thus established communion with Jupiter and between themselves.* The *materfamilias* became a kind of priestess of the household and the various ceremonies were a solemn initiation before she assumed that position; some straining of the relation between the divine and human beings of the household might be feared when a bride entered the family, and therefore she would be introduced in as propitious a manner as possible. By the *confarreatio* form of marriage, the wife became a partner in her husband's property, but the ordinary form of plebeian marriage was known as *consensus.*† Quite early in Roman history‡ marriage between a patrician and plebeian had been legalised and the children of plebeian women who married patricians took the rank of the father. On the other hand, the children of freedwomen were themselve free, and illegitimate children suffered from no disadvantage with regard to the gaining of office or honours.§

The *patria potestas* of the old Roman family was to be used for the good of the entire house and for the good of the State. This was its justification, and for this reason the wife was in a sense subject to the husband, who, however, was advised in serious matters concerning her by a council of relatives, hers as well as his.

* The sacramental part of the ceremony had become obsolete by the last century of the Republic.

† For various distinctions in marriage forms see *Roman Public Life*, by A. H. Greenidge, and for more detailed information the appendix to *Gallus*, by W. A. Becker.

‡ In 445 B.C.

§ For an account of Roman wedding customs see *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, by L. Friedlander.

From the poets of the Republic some glimpses of the lives and characters of Roman women may be obtained. Plautus* paints the middle and lower class life of Rome, although his scenes are laid in Greece. The wives in his plays are usually ill-tempered and unattractive, with the exception of Alcmena,† who voices an ideal of womanhood :

> " I call not that which is named by dower, my true dower, but chastity and modesty and passion subdued, fear of the Gods, affection to my parents, amity with my kinsman, a will to yield to thee, my husband, to be bountiful to the good, of service to the worthy."

But she has her pride, and it flashes forth when her husband wrongfully accuses her :

> " . . . of things which have not been done, and of which I have not been guilty, he accuses me, and supposes that I shall treat it with indifference. By heavens, I will not do so, nor will I allow myself to be falsely charged with dishonour ; but rather I will either leave him or make him give satisfaction and swear as well that he wishes unsaid the things which he has alleged against me in my innocence."

Most of the women-characters in the plays of Plautus, however, are slaves who have become prostitutes, represented as differing widely, but in general exhibiting hardness of heart and fondness for finery. Exceptions to the sordid and callous type invariably turn out to have been stolen or lost when young : Palæstra‡ and Adelphasium,§ both modest and kindly and desirous of living with only one man, are of this class and not born slaves. In the openness with which men pay procurers for girls, and the predominance

* Titus Maccius Plautus, 254–184 B.C.
† In *Amphitryon.*
‡ In *Rudens.*
§ In *Pœnulus.*

of this class of slave-women in the plays both of Plautus and Terence,* is seen a picture very different from the harmonious one wherein appears the matron of the upper class. But it was one aspect of womanhood and indicates the great importance and influence of the slave population. It cannot be overlooked in considering the position of women, any more than the prostitute on the one hand, and, on the other, the working-class woman of back streets, can be overlooked in the present day.

Three poets, Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius,† were profoundly influenced by women, none of whom seemed to have been worthy of the love they inspired, nor faithful to it. To his Lesbia‡ Catullus wrote :

> " No woman can say truly that she has been loved as much as you, Lesbia mine, were loved by me. No faithfulness in any bond was ever such as has been found on my part in my love for you."

But his invocation to the gods was not granted, nor the promise of his faithless mistress kept :

> " You promise to me, my life, that this love of ours shall be happy and last for ever between us. Ye great gods grant that she may be able to keep this promise truly, and that she may say it sincerely and from the heart, so that it may be our lot to extend through all our life this eternal compact of hallowed friendship."

Tibullus with his Delia, of whom he writes—

> " Thou art my ease from cares, a gleam in the black night, a multitude for me in places lone "

* The plays of Terence are more Hellenised in character than those of Plautus, and therefore not such reflections of Roman life.

† All living in the first century B.C.

‡ Supposed to be Clodia, sister of Publius Clodius, and wife of Metellus Celer ; she was a woman notorious for her infidelities.

was no more fortunate, nor was Propertius with Cynthia, who, he said, combined the characteristics of Venus and Minerva; yet, though their lives were rendered unhappy by their loves, their fame rests mainly on the poems expressing their joys and pains and the praises of their mistresses.

Of a noble type was a love-song by the poetess Sulpicia :*

> "At last has come a love, which, Rumour, it would shame me more to hide than to disclose to anyone. Won over by my Muse's prayers, Cythera's queen has brought and placed him in my arms. What Venus promised she hath fulfilled. . . . Let it be told that we have met, each worthy of the other."

A later poet† says of her :

> "By all our wives Sulpicia's read and known
> Who wish to win their husband's love alone.
> By all our husbands is Sulpicia read,
> Who only wish to please the wives they've wed.
> . . . . . .
> Affection, chaste and true, her note employs,
> And lovers' sprightly talk and frolic joys.
> Who reads her book and rightly values it,
> Would say she won the palm for wit
> And modesty. . . ."‡

Lucretius§ does not deal with woman in his poem‖ except indirectly in the high value he places upon human affections, and in his opinion that the chief bitterness of death lies in the thought of eternal separation from wife and children.

* Living in the first century B.C., and a kinswoman of Servius and Messala. An account of her poetry appears in *History of Latin Literature*, by G. A. Simcox.

† Martial, first century A.D.

‡ Martial X, 35. W. T. Webb's translation.

§ 98–50 B.C.

‖ *De Rerum Natura.*

One expression of the growing refinement of feeling was the finer conceptions of love between men and women than had previously existed among the Romans. An American writer* says of the lines of Tibullus, "No such sweet thought of love as this had been expressed before."

As a personification of the characteristics and aims of Rome, Augustus,† with his sense of order, his balanced temperament, and his authority, represents his people more nearly than most rulers. A survey of this reign in regard to women and religion epitomises the Roman attitude and the women's status. In members of his own family can be found many types of womanhood: Octavia, his sister, and wife of Antony, who has been designated one of the noblest women of antiquity, refused to take proceedings against her husband during his infatuation for Cleopatra, in order that the State might not be disturbed on her account, but she gave way to grief and lived in retirement on the death of her son, Marcellus, the heir of Augustus; Livia, the loved wife of Augustus, exercised a greater personal influence on him than any other contemporary—he often took counsel with her on political matters, writing down first what he was going to say to her. She accompanied her husband when he resided away from Rome, set an example of pure and dignified conduct to Roman society, and brought much happiness into his life;‡ both of these women were accorded public honours by Augustus

* H. O. Taylor, in *Ancient Ideals*.

† Gaius Octavius, 63 B.C.–A.D. 14.

‡ See the account of her in E. S. Shuckburgh's *Augustus: Life and Times of the Founder of the Roman Empire*, and *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire*, by L. Friedlander, Vol. I, Chapter V. No credit can be given to the gossip surrounding her and other dwellers in palaces.

during their lives. Atia, the mother of Augustus, persuaded him to accept the inheritance and title of Cæsar, and during his youth impressed him with a strong sense of duty ;* her son was devoted to her, and at her death† accorded her a public funeral. By the will of Julius Cæsar, Atia, who was his niece, was to conduct his funeral. ‡ Quite a different type was the daughter of Augustus, § Julia ; she had considerable knowledge and taste for literature, and her cheerful good nature made her popular, but her extravagance and doubtful company led her into intrigues of which her father was not suspicious. When discovery of her adultery came she was banished. In extenuation it must be remembered that Augustus had married her mother for political reasons, that she herself had been married to Agrippa, divorced from him, and married to Tiberius, || for the same reasons, and without any question of love, so she could have formed no ideals of the marriage relation, nor been able to pass any to her daughter, who, in later years, followed her example, and was also banished.

By the time of Augustus divorce was not difficult, as both men and women disliked being bound by the indissoluble tie of the religious form of marriage known as *confarreatio*, and it was the fashion among the richer classes to be married *sine manu*, that is, without the woman passing into the *manus* or power of her husband, so that she was still left subject to her father

* She has been compared to Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi.

† In 43 B.C.

‡ Shuckburg's *Augustus*.

§ By his wife, Scribonia, who was divorced on the day of Julia's birth.

|| The son of Livia by her former husband, and the successor of Augustus.

or guardian, or *sui juris* as circumstances decided.* This arrangement gave considerable liberty of action to the wife, as her father's *potestas* would naturally decrease with her removal to another home. Such marriages could be dissolved by either side without charge of misconduct. It must be remembered that many considerations would give each partner pause in so drastic an undertaking: public sentiment, Roman pride, family influence, joint interests, mutual esteem, children—all these would have weight in the final decision. Divorce, however, was frequent enough to make Augustus wish marriage to be regarded more seriously, and the responsibility of rearing citizens for the State to be undertaken more generally. He therefore brought about various reforms in the marriage laws: some dealt with the formalities of divorce, the necessity of witnesses and of a family council or court of inquiry; others ordained punishments for adultery (both parties were to be transported and to lose part of their property) and for seduction (flogging or imprisonment); and the tax on the unmarried known as *uxorium* was revived and increased.†

When Augustus was made Pontifex Maximus‡ he did much for the reorganisation of the State religion. Among other things he built a temple to Vesta,§ and gave the official residence of the Pontifex Maximus to the Vestal Virgins; his last will and testament was consigned to the keeping of the Vestals.‖ The pro-

* It may be noted that in the marriage ceremony a married woman "gives away" the bride, leading her to the bridegroom.

† Both Horace and Virgil in their writings supported the efforts of Augustus to establish family life on a firmer basis.

‡ In 12 B.C.

§ It was destroyed by fire in Nero's reign.

‖ *The Roman Empire*, by H. Stuart Jones. ("Story of the Nations" Series.)

cessions from the Palatine to the Capitoline were revived by him, and on these occasions sacrifices were offered in person by the Emperor on three successive days, to Jupiter and Juno on the Capitoline, and to Apollo and Diana on the Palatine. After the completion of the sacrifices, a choir of twenty-seven* boys and twenty-seven girls sang as they wended their way between the two hills, as in the early days of the Republic. For this revival of the *ludi sæculares* Horace wrote an ode or hymn to the different gods and goddesses who were honoured; it mainly refers to Apollo and Diana, but Ilythia, Jupiter, and Juno are also praised. The extracts are chiefly an invocation to Diana:

> "Phœbus, and queen of the woodland, Diana, lucent glory of the heavens, to be honoured even as ye have been honoured in all time, grant ye now what we ask. . . . Listen with gentle heart and kindly, thy quiver closed, to the boys' prayer, O Apollo! Queen of the stars, with horned bow, listen, Moon-goddess, to the girls! . . . Grant, Powers divine, to youth teachable hearts and honest lives, grant to old age peace and rest, grant to Romulus' race wealth and increase and all that is bright and happy."†

Virgil‡ gives comparatively little insight into the womanhood of his day. He wrote his epic to emphasise the growth and glory of the Roman empire through the *pietas* and *virtus* of the Romans—that sense of duty to family, the State, and the gods which conquered individual desires; and the episode of Dido is intended to augment the force of the moral. But the poet's sympathies are evidently with the unhappy queen, and his readers find her fate, her passions, and

* A sacred number with the Romans.

† The hymn, known as the *Carmen Sæculare*, is given in full in *Horace for English Readers*, translated by E. C. Wickham.

‡ P. Vergilius Maro, 70–17 B.C.

despair so pathetic as to cause alienation from Æneas, whose reputation suffers through his heartless desertion.* In the death scene,† and at the meeting of Dido and Æneas in Hades,‡ Virgil compels admiration for "infelix Dido" with her cry: "Well schooled in ill, I learn to aid distress."§ Mention has already been made of Juno's power throughout the story of the poem, and an earthly woman who helps to shape affairs is introduced in the form of the sister of Turnus.

Ovid‖ depicts Roman women under Greek names in his *Epistles of the Heroines*, supposed to be written by women famous in Greek legends or poetry to their absent husbands or lovers. Such characters as Penelope, Briseis, Ariadne, Dido and Medea express their feelings, but the characteristics and psychology are those of Roman ladies whom Ovid knew by observation and experience. The tender wish of Laodamia to be with her husband¶ to encourage him in his perils is thus expressed:

> "Ah! Trojan women (happier far than we),
> Fain in your lot would I partaker be!
> If ye must mourn o'er some dead hero's bier.
> And all the dangers of the war are near,
> With you at least the fair and youthful bride
> May arm her husband, in becoming pride;
> Lift the fierce helmet to his gallant brow,
> And with a trembling hand, his sword bestow;
> With fingers all unused the weapon brace,

* See the remarks on this point by W. Warde Fowler in *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*.

† *Æneid*, Book IV.

‡ *Ibid.* Book VI.

§ Her character is well sketched in J. Wight Duff's *Literary History of Rome*.

‖ Publius Ovidius Naro, 43 B.C.–17. A.D.

¶ Protesilaus, who went against Troy, and fulfilled the prophecy which said the first Greek chieftain who leapt on the Trojan shore should die.

And gaze with fondest love upon his face!
How sweet to both this office she will make—
How many a kiss receive—how many take!
When all equipped she leads him from the door,
Her fond commands how oft repeating o'er:
'Return victorious, and thine arms enshrine—
Return, beloved, to these arms of mine!'" . . .*

His love poems to Corinna, the "Art of Love" and the "Remedies of Love," present love in its most crude aspect, with lines here and there, however, that indicate a finer feeling, e.g.:

"Take, dear, a servant bound for ever; take
A heart whose troth no falsehood's e'er shall break.

. . . . . .

Thee will I make, be sure, my lifelong care;
With thee will spend what years the Fates shall give,
And when thou first shall suffer, cease to live."

In the long account which he gives of the parting scene with his wife† before going into exile can be seen their love for one another, and her desire to accompany him. One of his letters from exile is addressed to the poetess Perilla, to whom he had taught the art of verse. He says:

"Go, letter, hastily penned, to salute Perilla, the faithful messenger of my words, you will find her either sitting with her dear mother, or among her books and Muses."

And he tells her that if her genius remains still as vivid as of old, only Sappho would excel her. Exaggerated this estimate may be, but the names of Sulpicia, Perilla, Lesbia, Delia and others, remain to show that among the scanty literature of Rome women had some share both in its production and its inspiration.

* Rev. Alfred Church's *Ovid*.
† His third wife, Marcia.

Evidence is forthcoming from several writers of the first century A.D. Seneca* the moralist addresses two of his homilies to women and reveals the existence of homes of self-restraint and peace where women's characters wielded a powerful influence over husbands and sons. To Marcia, who was grieving over the loss of her son, he writes a letter of consolation† endeavouring to fortify her by contrasting the behaviour of Livia and Octavia at similar losses :

> " You have as little of a woman's weakness of mind as of her other vices. . . . Your life was regarded as a pattern of antique virtue. . . . I derive confidence, however, from the proved strength of your mind and your virtue which has been proved by a severe test. All men know how well you behaved to your father. . . .
>
> " Who would say that nature has dealt grudgingly with the minds of women and stunted their virtues ? Believe me, they have the same intellectual power as men, and the same capacity for honourable and generous action. If trained to do so, they are just as able to endure sorrow or labour. . . . Ye good goods, do I say this in that very city in which Lucretia and Brutus removed the yoke of rings from the neck of the Romans ? We owe liberty to Brutus, but we owe Brutus to Lucretia. . . . The statue of Cloelia,‡ mounted on horseback, in that busiest of thoroughfares, the Sacred Way, continually reproaches the youth of the present day, who never mount anything but the cushioned seat in a carriage, journeying in such a fashion through that very city in which we have enrolled even women among our knights. . . ."§

When he was in exile Seneca wrote to his mother, Helvia,‖ a strong woman who despised ostentation and extravagance, and who had given herself a liberal education. " My best of mothers," he calls her.

* L. Annæus Seneca, A.D. 3–66.

† Sixth Book of the *Dialogues*.

‡ One of the Roman hostages to Porsena who escaped but was sent back. Porsena, recognising her courage, set her free.

§ Translation by Aubrey Stewart.

‖ In the Eleventh Book of the *Dialogues*.

Treatises* on the education of women advocate the same training and education as being the most suitable method for both sexes, though certain tasks are considered more appropriate for a man or a woman ; the attitude is similar to that of Plato :

> " Perhaps all human tasks are open to all, and common both to men and women, and nothing is necessarily appointed exclusively for either ; not that some things may not be more suitable for one, and others for the other nature. . . . But whatever things have reference to virtue, these one may rightly affirm to be equally appropriate to both natures, since we say that virtues do not belong more to the one than to the other. . . ."†

From the times of Virginia onwards, this theory was to some extent put into practice with the middle and upper classes where boys and girls attended school together and received the same training, usually from a grammarian whose teaching would be mainly literary.‡ There is a tomb of a schoolmaster at Capua where he is represented on a high seat with a boy on one side of him and a girl on the other.§

Seneca also discourses on marriage, which is regarded as the happiest condition, and is described as a community of life where there is mutual care for each other in health and sickness and in every occurrence ; marriage where there is no community is worse than a desert. Men who do not marry are said to be inferior in usefulness and experience, and a solitary life is declared disadvantageous even for philosophers, for the whole of civilisation rests on the institution of

* Written by C. Musonius Rufus in the first century A.D.

† See Donaldson, *The Position of Woman in Ancient Greece and Rome.*

‡ See Mommsen's *History of Rome,* Book V, and Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius,* Chapter II, the whole of which gives an extremely fair survey of the women in that period.

§ Friedlander, *Roman Life and Manners in the Early Empire.*

marriage and "the man who takes away marriage from the human race takes away the household, takes away the State, takes away the human race."

Letters and treatises of the foregoing quality paint a truer picture of Roman women, their homes and surroundings, because an unconscious one, than the fulminations against deeds and characteristics of women written by certain satirical writers who must be taken at their true value. They probably refer only to a section of women in ancient Rome who to-day would correspond to smart society—the section least typical of womanhood. Juvenal* writes of the corrupt state of the Roman society of his time, but his strictures must be taken as referring to a limited class, and it would be as absurd to judge Roman women by the examples he quotes as to estimate the characteristics of English women in James I's time by citing the Countess of Somerset and her actions. Juvenal disapproves of the "new" woman equally with the vicious one; but collections of extracts such as could be culled from his writings are not useful in supplying material for a wide survey to the historian, since they give distorted impressions, and assign to all the vices of a few. Other evidence of his time proves that

> "The ideal of purity, both in men and women, in some circles was actually rising. In the families of Seneca, of Tacitus, of Pliny and Plutarch, there were not only spotless and high-minded women, there were also men with a rare conception of temperance and mutual love, of reverence for a pure wedlock. . . ."†

During every age the majority of men and women have gone on quietly working and living, marrying

* Decimus Julius Juvenalis, who lived in the latter half of the first century A.D.

† *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, by Samuel Dill.

and leaving children, turning to what they could discern of the good, and the beautiful, and the true; otherwise life on our earth would have assumed very different characteristics, if indeed it could have continued at all.

Martial,* who wrote satirical verses on some foibles of women, also composed a poem on the marriage of Pudens and Claudia† which foretells happiness for them:

> "Here, Hymen, here thy blessings shed,
> Bright burns thy torches' golden flame;
> For Prudens doth with Claudia wed,
> The Roman lord and British dame.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Him may her warm affection cheer,
> When youth on time's swift pinion flies;
> And so may she, when age is near,
> Seem never old to loving eyes."‡

That the condition of society at large was more normal than the pages of satirists would depict can also be seen from the letters of Pliny§ written during Juvenal's time. Here are found glimpses of pieties and nobilities, simple pleasures and laborious days, pure strong women, and men who appreciate them. Of Fannia,‖ Pliny writes, and remembers that she was the granddaughter of that Arria, who, when her husband was ordered by the Emperor Claudius to kill himself and was hesitating, stabbed herself and handed him the dagger, saying, "Non dolet, Pæte." He says of Fannia:

* *Circa* A.D. 40–103.
† Perhaps the same as are mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy iv. 21.
‡ IV, 13.
§ Caius Plinius Cæcilius Secundus—*circa* A.D. 62–107. He witnessed the eruption of Vesuvius in 79.
‖ Some account of her can be found in Dill's *Roman Society*.

"What purity is in thee, what holiness, what dignity, what courage! And at the same time how pleasing she is, and how courteous! one who can be loved—a rare excellence this—as kind as she is respected. . . . I reverenced, I loved both mother and daughter. . . ."

There is strong affection, as in the case of Seneca, between Pliny's mother and himself, but his greatest tenderness and love is reserved for his wife Calpurnia, to whose aunt he writes of her:

"Her intelligence is very great, very great her frugality, and in loving me she shows how good a heart she has. . . . She sings and sets to the harp my verses; and it is not any professor who teaches her, but love, who is the best of masters. These things make me feel a most certain hope that there will be a perpetual and ever-growing harmony between us. . . ."

To Calpurnia herself he wrote charming love letters, showing anxiety for her during her absence, and longing for her return:

"I am at this time specially anxious to be with you. . . . I entreat you, therefore, to do what you can for my fears, by writing once, nay even twice a day. . . . I am glad you miss me. . . . For my part I read and re-read your letters . . . but this only stirs in me a keener longing for you. What sweetness must be in the talk of one whose letters contain so much that pleases! . . . You will not believe what longing for you possesses me. The chief cause of this is my love; and then we have not grown used to be apart." . . .

A young girl of the time is described in another letter:

"I have the saddest news to tell you. Our friend, Fundanus, has lost his younger daughter. I never saw a girl more cheerful, more lovable, more worthy of long life—nay, of immortality. She had not yet completed her fourteenth year, and she had already the prudence of an

old woman, the gravity of a matron, and, still with all maidenly modesty, the sweetness of a girl. How she would cling to her father's neck! how affectionately and discreetly she would greet us, her father's friends! how she loved her nurses, her attendants, her teachers—every one according to his service! How earnestly, how intelligently, she used to read! How modest was she and restrained in her sports! And with what self-restraint, what patience—nay, what courage—she bore her last illness. She obeyed the physicians, encouraged her father and sister, and when all strength of body had left her, kept herself alive by the vigour of her mind. This vigour lasted to the very end. . . . She had been betrothed to a noble youth; the marriage day had been fixed, and we had been invited. How great a joy turned into how great a sorrow."*

In the pages of the historian Tacitus,† women appear occasionally. The life of Agricola, his father-in-law, contains praise of the care taken by Julia, the mother of Agricola, for her son's education, and he mentions Agricola's happy married life with Domita Decidiana; in the *Annals* he calls the rule of Agrippina for her son, Nero, the "five good years" of his reign; and throughout his *History* are revealed women of courage and ideals, even in the worst reigns. When he describes the habits of Teutonic women in his *Germania*, he makes no adverse comment on their freedom, and considers them worthy of imitation. From him it can be gathered‡ that the influence of women in provincial administration was a serious matter, though not always working for good: women often accompanied their husbands abroad, reviewed troops,§ and were called "Mothers of the Camp," became patronesses of towns and corporations, and statues could be seen

* Church and Brodrick's translation.
† Second half of first century A.D.
‡ Annals, XII.
§ The first Agrippina herself crushed a mutiny among soldiers.

erected to their honour in gratitude for various gifts to municipalities.*

Many inscriptions in various towns and provinces of Asia Minor bear witness to the part taken by women in political and civil matters. One woman undertook all a magistrate's duties, to whom her husband erected a statue inscribed thus :

> "The senate and people honoured Aurelia Harmasta, also called Tertia, the daughter of Medon, and chaste wife of Artemas, of the highest birth, who acted as Priestess of Hera the Queen, and as demiourgos,† and as chief priest, and did all that was usual on such occasions."

Another inscription to Menodora details her many gifts to her native city, including a sum of money for the maintenance of destitute children ; among her many offices was that of demiourgos, and priestess of all the gods.‡

Roman inscriptions also indicate various aspects of slave life ; often is recorded the love of a slave husband and wife, who are entitled *conjunx*§ on several tablets ; a memorial is erected by slaves in affection for a mistress ; the love of a noble for his nurse is inscribed, and a nurse mourns her foster child ; the devotion of women as slaves or free-women thus receives many appreciations.|| Macrobius¶ exhibits more humane feeling for slaves than does Jerome, and cites instances of their heroism and

* See Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius.*

† A demiourgos was one of the chief magistrates.

‡ M. Paris has written a thesis on the significance of such inscriptions, entitled *Quatenus feminæ res publicas in Asia Minore, Romanis imperantibus, attigerint.*

§ Instead of the servile term *contubernalis.*

|| Many instances are given in Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius.*

¶ In his *Saturnalia.*

devotion, especially of the girls towards their mistresses.*

Another class of women, which increased in numbers as the manumission of slaves became more frequent, was that of the freedwoman, who had no recognised social position. Many of them took up some form of trade or other occupation: innkeeping, medicine, acting, the barber's art, driving chariots, were all practised by Roman women.† There were women physicians, mostly midwives, but they also attended to women's diseases and received medical training for such work. In some cases freedwomen were cultured and accomplished, but debarred by their origin from entrance into the society of their mental equals, and therefore many became the mistresses of men in higher rank.‡ The most noted is Panthea, rendered famous by Lucian's description of her :§

> "... She has a voice of a marvellous and mellow sweetness, which lingers in the ear with a haunting memory. And the soul was worthy of such a fair dwelling-place. In her love of music and poetry, combined with a strength of intellect capable of handling the highest problems in politics or dialectics, she was a worthy successor of those elder daughters of Ionia whose charm of strength drew a Socrates or a Pericles to their feet. Surrounded by luxury and the pomp of imperial rank, and linked to a very unworthy lover,|| Panthea never lost her natural modesty and simple sweetness."

Some of the freedwomen became priestesses at the temples of Magna Mater or of Isis. The worship of

* For more inscriptions on tombs see Friedlander's *Roman Life and Manners in the Early Empire*, Vol. I, Chapter V.
† See E. A. Hecker's *History of Women's Rights*.
‡ Compare the *hetairæ* of Greece.
§ In his *Imagines*.
|| She was the mistress of L. Verus.

these two goddesses extended into the fourth century A.D., and of the former it is said that—

> "the great goddess became the universal Mother, full of tenderness and grace, and giving peace through her cleansing rites."*

The baptism of blood that cleansed a sinner, known as the Taurobolium,† originated in the worship of the Great Mother, and those who went through the ceremony considered themselves in *æternum renatus*.‡ Vespasian restored the temple of Magna Mater at Herculaneum, the ruins of which have been excavated, and an inscription to the Mother of the Gods can be deciphered;§ in Trajan's reign her worship had spread to Spain and Dacia; Antoninus Pius had her image stamped on his coins. The broad-minded Trajan‖ is also responsible for the public instruction, at State expense, of girls and boys, the former being given the same opportunities and privileges as the latter. It is said that five thousand girls and boys were educated in Trajan's reign alone.¶

More widespread than the worship of Magna Mater in the early centuries of the Christian era was that of Isis,** who was addressed as "Thou who art all, Queen of Peace, and Universal Mother," and was regarded as pre-eminently the power who could cleanse

* Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*. It can be seen whence arose the practice of the worship of the Virgin Mary.

† It was later on connected with Mithraism.

‡ For a description of the rite, see Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*.

§ A description is given in *Buried Herculaneum*, by Ethel R. Baker, a book which contains illustrations of noble busts of goddesses and Amazons significant of the dignity of woman.

‖ Died A.D. 117.

¶ Pliny, *Panegyrics*, XXVI.

** Plutarch gives a full account of the myths of Osiris and Isis in his *De Iside et Osiride*.

and comfort, besides being the goddess of spring and fruitfulness, the guardian of those on the sea, and the initiator into the new world after death. It is supposed that her cult probably arrived in Italy through merchants and sailors,* and the ease with which Dionysiac rites were suppressed was probably because attention was diverted to the Egyptian Isis, who appealed specially to women. They saw in her a glorified type of their sex,† and worshipped her twice daily, with a morning litany and sacrifice, and an evening chant.‡ Her devotees passed through purification and fasting and practised asceticism before initiation. Though Egyptian in origin, the cult of Isis was moulded by Roman characteristics during the centuries it was practised by the Roman world,§ so that it can be regarded as expressing certain aspects of Roman religious consciousness.

Apuleius‖ has given the story of an initiation to the mysteries of Isis and described a vision of the goddess :

> " In answer to his prayer, there arose from the moonlit sea a divine and awful form, which no words could shadow forth. Her long rich tresses were crowned with flowers, and with a radiant moonlit disc upheld by snakes on either side. Her robe of glistening white now changed to saffron, now flushed into roselike flame. Her mantle of deepest darkness was bordered with the bickering light of stars. ' Lo, I come,' the vision said, ' in answer to thy prayers— I, Nature, mother of all things, mistress of all the elements,

* In the second century B.C.

† Again a comparison may be drawn with the cult of the Divine Mary.

‡ See Mommsen's *History of Rome*, Book V. The Catholic Church borrowed some of her ceremonial from the worship of Isis. See Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire.*

§ The evolution of Isis worship is indicated with much literary beauty in J. G. Frazer's *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Chapter VI.

‖ Second century A.D.

the primal birth of all ages, supreme divinity, Queen of the world of shades, first of the inhabitants of heaven, in whom all gods have their unchanging type. . . . One Power adored by all the world under many a name, and with many rites. . . . Dry thy tears and assuage thy grief: already by my providence the dawn of a saving day is breaking. Attend my solemn festival and await the touch of my priest which shall set thee free. Become my servant, and live in hope by constant devotion and steadfast purity to see my glory in the world to come."

The process of initiation involved purification, fasting and asceticism; the ritual of worship was elaborate, and the processions magnificent.* In all, initiation, ritual and processions, women held a prominent part, and the devotion poured forth to a goddess, together with the almighty power ascribed to her, could not but react on the conception of, and attitude towards, womanhood. A prayer by an initiate expresses the spirit of this later Roman religion:

"Holy one, constant saviour of the race of men, so bountiful in cherishing them, so tender in the mother's love which thou dost bestow on the wretched. Nor day nor night, nor shortest moment passes unmarked by thy benefits, without the help of thy protection for men on sea and land, without thy sheltering hand outstretched to ward off the storms of life. Powers above and powers below alike await on thy will. Thou makest the world to revolve, thou givest his light to the sun, thou art ruler of the Universe, thou dost tread Tartarus under thy feet. . . . But I am too feeble in mind to speak thy praise, too poor in worldly goods to pay thee sacrifice; nor have I wealth of utterance to tell all that I feel of thy grandeur. A thousand lips, a thousand tongues, an unbroken eternity of unfailing praise would not avail. . . . The features of thy holy godhead will be treasured in the thoughts of my inmost soul for evermore."

Guilds were formed where the lonely found succour,

* A description of a procession and initiation ceremony is given in full (except for the last inner mysteries) in Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire.*

and social as well as religious activities,* and Isis temples spread to such far-distant centres as Cologne, Holland and York; her triumph was complete by the Antonine Age.†

> "The message of the cult of Isis as preached by her priests was one of hope and happiness, and coming to the Greeks and Romans, as it did, at a time when men were weary of their national cults, and when the speculations of the philosophers carried no weight with the general public, the people everywhere welcomed it with the greatest enthusiasm. From Egypt it was carried to the Islands of Greece and to the mainland, to Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal, and then crossing the western end of the Mediterranean it entered N. Africa. . . . The festivals and processions of Isis were everywhere most popular . . . in fact, the Isis-play that was acted annually in November, and the festival of the blessing of the ship which took place in the spring, were the most important festivals of the year."‡

An even greater rival to Christianity in its long struggle with Paganism was the worship of Mithra, the Sun God, introduced fron Persia.§ As the two religions developed they evolved similarities in some of their rites, beliefs, and festivals, such as the sacrament with consecrated bread and the teaching about resurrection; and each religion celebrated festivals at the winter solstice and the spring equinox.‖ Mystical as Mithraism was, it did not absorb women's attention to so great an extent as the worship of Isis,

* From some of these guilds evolved some of the early Christian societies.

† Second century A.D.

‡ Introduction to *The Legends of the Gods*, by E. A. Wallis Budge.

§ First century B.C., when Pompey defeated the pirates from Cilicia. Visitors to the British Museum will remember the beautiful sculpture of Mithra slaying the Bull.

‖ So similar were some of the early stages of the two religions that the Christian Fathers declared the devil had plagiarised their rites by anticipation! See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, by G. R. S. Mead.

though holy virgins of Mithra are mentioned.* An inscription on the monument erected by his wife to Prætextatus affords insight into the value placed upon their religion; Paulina,† herself a priestess of Isis, records her gratitude for the love and confidence with which her husband made her his partner in all sacred mysteries. Prætextatus commemorates his wife as the sharer of his inmost secrets, devoted to the temple service of the gods, pure in mind and body, and benevolent to all.‡

Stoicism, with its suppression of the feelings, did not appeal so widely to women, although it produced the noble matrons of Seneca's time, and he himself had a lofty ideal as to what women might become. Marcus Aurelius§ has left, in his immortal meditations, the thanks due to his mother, Domitia Calvilla, for her training:

> "As for my mother, she taught me to have regard for religion, to be generous, and open-handed, and not only to forbear from doing anybody an ill turn, but not so much as to endure the thought of it. By her likewise I was bred to a plain, inexpensive way of living, very different from the common luxury of the rich. . . . I have to thank the gods . . . that I had the satisfaction of my mother's life and company a considerable while, though she was destined to die young."‖

High-minded, accomplished women appear through the centuries wherein Christianity was merging with and gradually supplanting the ancient Roman religion; in many families religious observances and beliefs widely differed among the members with no

* By Tertullian.
† Tabia Aconia Paulina.
‡ Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire.*
§ A.D. 161–180.
‖ Jeremy Collier's translation.

loss of affection. Such was the case with Paula, the friend of Jerome, whose husband and son both practised the worship of their ancestors. The son married another friend of Jerome, Læta, herself the offspring of a mixed marriage. Discussions were carried on in this family and with Jerome regarding religious truths, but with no bitterness. From the letters of Symmachus are noted many references to the status of women, who while becoming less restrained than the matrons of olden time, had gained in charm. Woman, in his time, is the companion of her husband in all his interests, and her influence on public affairs becomes more marked. Ausonius* pictures the quiet life of people outside Rome in his poems,† and his sketches of the women bring to mind the Puritans of New England in their care for the household and strict probity mingled with sweetness; one of his aunts went farther afield and studied medicine.

The reigns of Gratian and Theodocius marked the conclusion of the struggle between the Roman religion and Christianity with the triumph of the latter; Gratian confiscated the endowments of the college of the Vestal Virgins and other temples‡ and Theodocius made the final breach.§ Julian's attempt to undermine Christianity had been due to a mistake in judgment; he himself, in conjunction with a large class, were probably broad in their views, and recognised the good in each religion, but thought some definite form of worship necessary for "the people."

* A philosophic pagan who died probably in A.D. 390.

† Especially the *Parentalia*.

‡ Henry VIII followed this example in the suppression of the monasteries.

§ Pagan worship was finally prohibited in A.D. 392.

However, though its rites were suppressed, the spirit and tone of Paganism retained their hold, and its influence on the status of womanhood was carried forward. Religion and the State had been closely connected, and woman was prominent in both ; Law, for which the Romans showed most genius, had treated women to a great extent as free and reasonable beings. In this *milieu* lived those from whom were descended the Roman women of the New Testament, who in their turn became the ancestresses of the women of Catholicism. Juno, Magna Mater, and Isis were the prototypes of the deified Mary ; even the classical Madonna of the art of Raphael and Correggio contains some elements of Rome. With no definite break the foundations formed by the Roman religion were built upon and developed by Christian tradition and custom ; for the past necessarily forms the basis upon which the present must construct.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIANITY—I

Discussion must consider other elements besides religion—nearer to us than other religions.—Impartiality of view.—Christianity includes all that man has made it during 2,000 years.—Jesus of Gospels lived in surroundings where no woman problem had arisen—his attitude fair but aloof.—The virtues he emphasised those easier of attainment to women.—Feminine element marked in Gospel story, but no rules or prohibitions for women.—In Early Church woman's sphere unrestricted—Paul's strictures implied that women taught and preached.—His women helpers.—His attitude probably not so antagonistic as supposed.—Pentecost and Essene banquets of men and women.—In Acts women active in propagation of religion.—Women clergy.—The *Shepherd of Hermas*—visions of women and their teaching.—The early Christian fathers.—Quotations.—Augustine.—Church councils and woman's depravity, but no council discussed whether woman had a soul.—Martyrs.—Early Catholicism and its influence on woman's position.—The worship of the Divine Mary—its origin.—Apocryphal books—the Holy Ghost feminine.—Reaction on women.—Dante's poetry—Beatrice—the Rosa Mystica.—The ideal of asceticism and celibacy degraded woman—erroneous idea of "this vile body"—concubines.—Contradictory spiritual significance given to marriage—chastity and celibacy.—Catholicism caused human nature to control sex instinct.—Monasticism and nuns—sphere and scope for women—their work in convents—education of girls.—Great abbesses.—Saints, as companions to men—Clara, Catherine of Siena, Theresa.—Was there a woman pope?—Women in feudal times—woman's legal status—*jus primæ noctis*.—Joan of Arc and her work.—Church the dominant factor in life of Middle Ages.

IN a discussion of Christianity and its connection with women the elements to be considered are different and more complex than with other religions; and the reasons for this are neither simple

nor few. Perhaps no other religion has been so systematised or so logically treated; and no other religion has been so organised, especially in its Roman Catholic aspect, with the result that it has entered every phase of life in the past. The religion has also been obliged to adjust itself to science, which has not reached so high a standard anywhere as in the Western nations where Christianity had exerted its influence for centuries. It will be admitted that these nations, in Western Europe and America, have progressed towards civilisation to a greater extent than the more Eastern races, although even they are yet far from realisation of all that Humanity can compass. This fact, of the greater civilised condition of countries where Christianity has ruled, must be taken into account, for it means that other forces than those of religion have helped to determine woman's position; and whatever spheres or powers are to-day possessed by women have become theirs through social and economic causes in addition to Christian doctrine and influence. Of course this is true of womanhood all over the world at the present time, but more so in the foremost European nations, since the Christian religion here has not such all-pervading power as in countries less affected by modern progress. Therefore it is necessary to keep in mind all the factors which constitute social life and which are inevitably mingled with what is meant by Christianity. Nowadays no "question," such as that of Feminism, or Labour, or Theology can be pursued along a straight road without taking into consideration all the other roads, branching from or parallel to it. Another possible source of difficulty arises from the sensibilities of devout Christians who may not appreciate the

discussion of matters that have been sacred to them from their youth up. But this objection also applies to all religions; it is, however, nearer to the readers of these pages in that most of them will have a tendency to reverence Christianity more than other religions. But womanhood is more deeply seated and more far reaching than any religion, and a certain impartiality of spirit must be observed in order to do justice either to the religion or to the influence of women.

The religion of Christianity embraces far more than what is contained in the Gospels or even in the whole of the New Testament. In considering the content of the term the mind must range through the history of the early Christian church with its martyrs, sects, councils, and fathers; it must wander through the feudal ages and note the growth of Catholicism with its far-reaching power; it must examine the monastic system and the lives of saints and mystics; it must watch the emergence of Protestantism and the breaking of fetters; and it must review the various activities of Christian churches at the present time. In fact, Christianity includes all that mankind—men and women together—have made it during two thousand years. Institutions, customs, prohibitions, habits of mind, attitudes to life and its problems, as well as doctrine and belief, form a religion; and the Christian faith is no exception to this comprehensive rule.

The early Church came into contact with the Judaic and Roman conceptions of woman, but the Jesus of the Gospels lived in surroundings * where there was no woman problem, and, as far as can be seen, he had

* See a concise but illuminating chapter on the Social and Religious Environment in which the New Testament originated, in F. J. Gould's *The New Testament*, a valuable little book that epitomises the latest research, and is fruitful in suggestions.

no special interest in her sex or its position. Never having been married, he knew no woman in the closest relationship, and, like many other enthusiasts, he held the ties of blood lightly. His mission absorbed all his thoughts, feelings, imagination, and energies, so that he regarded those who forsook everything for the Kingdom of God worthy of reward.* Renan† also remarks that—

> " in his bold revolt against nature he went still further, and we shall see him trampling underfoot everything that is human, blood, love, country, and only keeping soul and heart for the idea which presented itself to him as the absolute form of goodness and truth."

But the Gospel records indicate no animus against women such as some of the writings ascribed to St. Paul and a few of the Fathers exhibited, and much that upholds their cause can be gathered by feminists from the sayings of Jesus. In dealing with women he was fair, as is seen in his treatment of the woman taken in adultery and of the woman with the box of ointment. To quote the words of the author of *Ecce Homo*,‡ he " refused to judge a woman," and implied that blame lay with the man as well. It may be noted that the virtues and qualities Jesus emphasised were those more easy of attainment to women than to men —mercy, pity, care for the afflicted, devotion, faith. Perhaps this fact was the cause of the great number of women adherents and ministrants that followed him. He accepted their services and spoke to them equally with men. Those who search the gospels will find that some of his most important utterances were delivered to women even when only one or two were

* See Matthew xix. 29 and Luke xviii. 29.
† *Life of Jesus*.
‡ J. R. Seeley.

present ; and many of his first converts were women.* The atmosphere in which the Gospel story proceeds is one in which the feminine element is very marked, and nothing like it is found, for instance, in the surroundings of Socrates. The friends of Jesus numbered women among them ; Mary and Martha, two different types, yet both accepting his teaching and following his advice, and Mary Magdalene, who " loved much " and to whom he first showed himself after his burial, are instances. His thought did not shut them out, for many parables are concerned chiefly with women : the importunate widow who obtained her wish, the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, the woman who by perseverance found the lost coin—all these give no mean view of women.

But on the whole the teachings of Jesus had little direct effect *at the time* on the position of women ; he accepted their status, showed them consideration, but scarcely differentiated them as a sex. On the other hand, his personality appealed to them and evoked their instinct of care and protection,† so that some continued with him to the end. There were no rules made for women, no prohibitions, no division of duties ; no special " sphere " was assigned to them. But with the growth of the early church, for the very reason that it was a church—that is, an organisation—there gradually came about certain definite opinions as to what was fitting for women. At first the sphere was comparatively unrestricted in spite of the declamations of Paul and the Paulinists. These, however, exerted greater influence some centuries after they were written, and are, in themselves, a sign that women

* See Matthew xv. and xxvii., and John iv.

† Compare the way in which women ministered to the wants of Buddha.

were already engaged in activities of which the apostle disapproved. His strictures concerning women who taught * or preached † would obviously be addressed to those who did these things, and were taking their share in the spread of the new religion.‡ Elsewhere § Paul appreciates and praises the work of women in connection with the church: Phœbe, "a succourer of many and of mine own self"; Prisca, "unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles"; "Mary, who bestowed much labour on you"; Tryphæna and Tryphosa and Persis the beloved, "which laboured much in the Lord"—these names are sufficient to indicate not only the fact that women were influential in the church, but also that Paul accepted and approved of their work. But it is only in subordinate positions that he will sanction their presence, for as Christ was the head of the church so was man the head of the woman,‖ and no woman should have dominion over a man.¶ Yet in the home he wishes women "to rule the household,"** and he asserts that in Christ there is neither male nor female.†† Although attempts have been made to prove that Paul desired sex equality and even held the views of a feminist,‡‡ such attempts usually consist of word-quibbling; and a general survey of the writings accredited to him will give the conclusion that his

* 1 Timothy ii. 12.

† 1 Corinthians xiv. 34, 35.

‡ There is a case made out for women preachers in a booklet entitled *Women in the Ministry*, by Hatty Baker.

§ Romans xvi.

‖ Ephesians x. 23.

¶ 1 Timothy ii. 12.

** 1 Timothy iv. 14.

†† Galatians iii. 28.

‡‡ A little booklet, 101 *Questions Answered*, by Katherine Bushnell, has several ingenious, but scarcely convincing, interpretations and arguments to this end.

attitude towards women was the usual Roman or Jewish one tinged with a certain asceticism. The three pastoral Epistles* in which the most insistence is given to woman's subordination are not now considered Pauline, but since they were so considered in the days when their teaching was most influential, their effect was the same as if they proceeded from Paul himself. Sufficient of his sentiments can be gathered, however, to form a general conception of his attitude to womanhood, and it was probably not so marked as is usually supposed. His opinion that celibacy was the better state† at once gave to women a lower place; his view that marriage was a way of escape from sin similarly degraded marriage, and there is a touch of unconscious humour in his declaration that "it is better to marry than to burn." The contradictory views are probably due to interpolations, and Paul is likely to have appreciated women's work in a sphere where he so enthusiastically spent his own energies. Paulinism was in favour of monogamy, and thus forwarded the tendency in that direction, although with the proviso that wives should submit themselves to their husbands,‡ a command that is strengthened by that of Peter.‖

At Pentecost men and women are together,¶ as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when the spirit comes upon them, and the fact calls to mind the custom of the Essœans (or Essenes) at their religious feasts. Here both sexes shared in the banquet, the men sitting on the right and the women on the left.

* 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus.
† 1 Corinthians vii. 1 *et seq.*
‡ Ephesians v.
‖ 1 Peter iii. 1.
¶ Hemmelinck's picture, *The Descent of the Holy Ghost*, shows the Madonna as the central figure.

Philo gives detailed descriptions* of these banquets and praises the manner of life of the "wisdom-lovers," saying that, in their sanctuaries, where they assembled every seventh day, "women, too, habitually form part of the audience, possessing the same eager desire and having the same deliberate choice."† Since the Therapeuts,‡ with their doctrines and customs, were part of the background from which the basis of Christianity was formed, woman's place was already assigned when the early days of the church started.

The Acts of the Apostles record many instances of women's work§ in the early church, and they appear to have been as active in the propagation of their faith as the men. Dorcas or Tabitha acted on the essence of the Christian message in caring for the poor, and Lydia was the first person in Europe to become a Christian.‖ Women who prophesied, or spoke forth the truth they felt, are also mentioned,¶ and the order of "widows" or Vidua, which did not necessarily mean married women, was one consisting of women holding ecclesiastical office. Tertullian speaks** of "the Virgins who are called Widows," and mentions four classes of women officials: widow, deaconess, presbytera, virgin; and the two former he calls "apostolic orders." Recognised orders of women

* In *De Vita Contemplativa*.

† From Conybeare's edition of the text of Philo's treatise. Philo has been called the father not only of Christian exegesis, but also of Christian dogmatics.

‡ Or Healers.

§ See Acts ix. 36; xvi. 13; xvii. 34; xvii. 4 and 12.

‖ For full accounts of these and other women see *Women of Christendom*, by the author of *The Schonberg-Cotta Family*.

¶ Acts xxi. 9.

** In his epistle to Smyrna.

clergy, ordained by bishops, officiated,* and one of the Canons in the First Œcumemical Council at Nicea, in speaking of the re-ordination of the Paulinists into the Catholic Church, prescribed the same rite for the ordination of women as for men.† If a woman married after she had been ordained she was excommunicated, and the Council of Chalcedon‡ fixed the age for ordination at forty years. Her duties were to administer baptism and the sacraments, and in the Catacombs are to be found representations of women clergy presiding at the eucharist, and of others seated in episcopal chairs.§ The Councils of Paris‖ record that "women serve at the altar and give the Lord's Body and Blood to the people," and as late as the thirteenth century Brother Berthold, a preacher of South Germany, speaks against women officiating at divine service and predicts that mischief may result. Evidences of this kind indicate that in outlying districts of the church women held offices of which they were later on deprived. In the little known book, *The Shepherd of Hermas*,¶ pre-eminence is given to women as religious teachers. Hermas himself is, in the visions he describes, admonished by two women, Rhoda, and a dame representing the church called Ecclesia

* See the first chapters of *Woman's Work in the Church*, by J. M. Ludlow. The book contains a good account of religious sisterhoods.

† *History of the Church Councils*, by C. J. Hefele (W. R. Clark's translation). The so-called "apostolic Constitutions" also mention the ordination of women and give the form of service. In Book II, Chapter XXVI, the deaconess is likened to the Holy Ghost and the deacon to Christ.

‡ A.D. 451.

§ Whether these Catacomb drawings represent Christian ceremonies in all instances is doubtful, as the first centuries held many religious bodies who kept holy feasts and used the Catacombs.

‖ In 824 and 829.

¶ See *A Literary History of Early Christianity*, by C. T. Cruttwell.

> "seated on a chair white like snow, on which she sat down alone, unfolding the book in her hand, and bidding him give ear to the glories of God."

In one vision Ecclesia shows him seven women representing the Christian graces: Faith, the mother of them all, Temperance, Simplicity, Innocence, Modesty, Knowledge, Love. Twelve virgins appear in another vision and spend two days with Hermas, treating him as a brother. It is explained that they are twelve virtues beloved of all faithful souls, and they are contrasted with twelve others representing evil qualities. Such authorities as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Athanasius held the book in high estimation, placing it little below the writings accepted as inspired. Written originally in Greek, it attained such a reputation among the early churches that a Latin version appeared in the second century, and the prominence given to women in it cannot have failed to influence its readers or hearers.

It has even been claimed that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by a woman, Prisca or Priscilla, the wife of Acquila, but there is no satisfactory proof that this was so. Certain it is that the establishment of Christianity owed much to women, and that its ideas of mercy, gentleness, chastity and love were of a kind to elevate the feminine rather than the masculine aspects of life.

A section of the early fathers, however, looked on woman as an evil thing, and disapproved of her participation in official church matters. But their fulminations would irritate rather than convince, and the very extravagance of the diatribes would frustrate their own purpose. Thus the intolerant Tertullian* says

* A native of N. Africa. He practised law and became converted to Christianity. His life is sketched in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, by F. J. A. Hort. He died at the beginning of the third century.

"You are the devil's gateway—you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. . . . On account of you even the Son of God had to die."*

His bitterness was caused by the luxury indulged in by many professing Christian women.† The Montanists, whom he afterwards joined, aroused his indignant protest for their acknowledgment of a certain equality between the sexes, and their practice of appointing women to official positions. Two of their most renowned prophetesses were Priscilla and Maximilla. This sect gave praise to Eve for first eating of the tree of knowledge, and to the daughters of Philip for asserting women's right to prophesy. Tertullian arraigns them thus :

"The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to undertake cures, and even to baptize."

He wishes women to hide their natural grace or beauty by concealment and negligence so that they may not be dangerous to the beholders. A selection of the sayings uttered by other Fathers of the Church will give the attitude of a certain group :

"Nothing disgraceful is proper for man who is endowed with reason; much less for woman to whom it brings shame even to reflect of what nature she is.‡

"A person may find one man chaste among a thousand, but a woman never."§

* From *De Habitu Muliebri*. But in *Ad Uxorem*, an open letter to his wife (given in *Writings of Tertullian*, Vol. I) he paints a more favourable picture of Christian women.

† For a general account of his remarks on women see *A Literary History of Christianity*, by C. T. Cruttwell.

‡ Clement of Alexandria. In general, however, he evinces much common sense in his remarks, and says, "It is right for men to repose confidence in their wives and commit the charge of the household to them." See the two volumes on Clement of Alexandria in the "Ante-Nicene Christian Library."

§ Gregory Thaumaturgus.

"Woman's philosophy is to obey the laws of married life. Fierce is the dragon and cunning the asp. But woman has the malice of both.*

"Thou art the devil's gate, the betrayer of the tree, the first deserter of the divine law. . . . What say'st thou, O woman? Why, thou hast no longer a body of thine own, and hast thou money of thine own? . . . She shall not demand equality for she is under the head."†

St. Augustine, who owed more to his mother than most men, and who acknowledges it in his *Confessions*, yet questions as to why woman was created at all. It could not have been to make man a companion, for another man would have fulfilled that purpose. The reason must be that the glorious Adam could not have been tempted by a mere serpent, and therefore woman, of inferior intelligence and will, was created to bring about the prearranged drama of the fall! On the other hand he remarks on the special honour paid to the sex by Christ being born of a woman "for the consolation of womankind," so that they might all be elevated in the scale of being through the Virgin Mary.

Various councils also endeavoured to prove woman's depravity, and to deprive her of privileges, with the consequence that as the centuries passed she was barred from officiating equally with man. The Council of Laodicea‡ dismissed woman from the ministry and forbade her to serve at the altar; the Council of Orleans§ shut her out of the diaconate; the Council

* Gregory Nazianzen.

† All from St. John Chrysostom, who had crowds of women listeners, and many deaconess friends. An account of them and of his letters may be found in J. M. Ludlow's *Women's Work in the Church*. Chrysostom's tone in corresponding with deaconesses and other women was very different from that of the above quotations, and he often gives them high praise.

‡ A.D. 365.

§ A.D. 511,

of Auxerre* forbade her to receive the sacrament in her bare hands on account of her impurity or inherent wickedness. However, it must not be left out of account that social and economic causes would also tend to keep woman out of official positions in the Church. As the religion became more organised the priesthood would be supported; in other words a priest would be a breadwinner. In most cases a woman would be a wife and would not earn money. Thus, when religion demanded faith and enthusiasm, women as well as men gave them; when it became a profession, women did not enter it any more than they entered other professions.

It is not true that any Council discussed whether woman had a soul, as is so often asserted. The tradition appears to have arisen because at the Council of Mâcon a certain bishop questioned whether the word *homo* should be applied to women. It was pointed out to him that in classical Latin the word applied to both sexes, and was not restricted to males in the Scriptures. The discussion was grammatical rather than theological or feminist, and only one early writer, Gregory, Bishop of Tours, refers to it.† Dom Leclercq, a modern French Benedictine, also points out the prevailing mistaken notion: ‡

> "La difficulté soulevée ne vise pas l'âme humaine et raisonnable de la femme, mais le nom homme, *homo*, que cet évèque puriste s'étonne de lui voir attribuer."

Thus the Christian Church does not bear the blame of the absurdity that has so often been imputed to it.§

* A.D. 587. All these, and also the Council of Mâcon, are mentioned in *The Advance of Woman*, by J. J. Christie.

† In his *Historia Francorum*, Vol. III.

‡ In his edition of the *Histoire des Conciles*.

§ There have been articles on the subject, pointing out the mistake, by Herbert Thurston, in *The Month*, for January, 1911, and by Joseph Clayton, in *Votes for Women*, for November 7th, 1913.

And it must not be concluded that all early Fathers or Councils of the Church disparaged woman. Writings are not such important witnesses as the growth of institutions; and evidences of woman's share in the establishment of the various customs and organisations of the Catholic Church give sufficient proof of her activities and influence. Mabillon records that the evangelisation of Europe was in great part due to the work of Benedictine nuns; Jerome, who wrote a Life of Women of his Day,* highly praises Marcella among others, and says:

> "All that I learnt with great study and long meditation the blessed Marcella learnt also, but with great facility, and without giving up any of her other occupations, or neglecting any of her pursuits. . . . Rome became Jerusalem under the influence of Marcella."

He calls Fabiola "the wonder of the ages," and Demetrias "a prodigy of sanctity," and he referred the most difficult points of his Commentary on Ezekiel to Paula, a "widow" or Vidua, famous for her Hebrew scholarship, and one of his chief friends. In fact, "no adequate presentment of him has ever omitted the Lady Paula and her daughter, each a truest helper—inspirer and protectress, disciple and friend."†

In the records of martyrdom are found instances which prove that the courage, endurance, and loyalty of women was no less than that of men,‡ although the total number of early martyrs is probably not so great as is generally supposed.§ But it is questionable whether martyrdom has not received eulogy rather out of proportion to its merits.‖ To suffer in order to

* The latter half of the fourth century A.D.
† Professor Patrick Geddes, in his *Masque of Ancient Learning*.
‡ It is only necessary to call to mind Blandina of Lyons.
§ See *The Early Persecutions of the Christians*, by L. H. Canfield.
‖ The various reasons for the persecutions are well put by T. G. Tucker, in his *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul*.

uphold a faith is admirable, and yet the feelings and sufferings of others claim a certain consideration. A martyr suffers as a witness to his or her faith, as an expression of passionate loyalty to an idea or a personality, and in order to save his or her soul. Is a woman justified, for any of the foregoing reasons, in allowing her infant to die slowly of starvation before her eyes, as some mothers did, or in causing such agony to a father as Perpetua* brought to hers? It is a mistaken enthusiasm which takes so absolute a point of view as to disregard the claims of daily life, and the dependence of others. But in serving to propagate their gospel and in testifying to the strength of their faith, the blood of women martyrs to a certain extent achieved its purpose and helped to establish institutions and ideals which wrought a marked change in the Pagan world.†

In many aspects of life did the rise of Christianity in Europe forward great, if gradual, developments, but in none more than in the position of women. So intimately did the religion touch every sphere, that on many sides were women affected, and in many ways did they modify the manifestations of the new faith, and the changing order of life. It was a period of upheaval, with new races struggling for dwelling-places and power; but amidst all the turmoil the Catholic Church stretched out its wide-embracing arms, and gathered within them the life, and problems, and aspirations of the time.

William of Ockham, one of the most original thinkers

* As recorded in *Women of Christendom*, by the author of *The Schonberg-Cotta Family*.

† Something of the effect of Christianity on the position of women can be gathered from *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, Chapter V, by W. E. H. Lecky, but the point of view there taken deals rather with abnormalities than the normal social life.

of the Middle Ages,* insisted on the responsibility of the Pope to a General Council of Christendom, and said that no such Council could be truly representative unless it contained women as well as men. Among his *Dialogues*† is one between a Master and a Disciple where the idea is mooted :

> " MASTER : There should be a General Council, bearing the authority and commission of every part of universal Christendom to treat of the common good . . . in such a council we must treat of faith and of other matters which concern all Christian folk."
>
> " DISCIPLE : Wherefore is it said women should not be excluded outright from the General Council against their will ? "
>
> " MASTER : By reason of the unity of men and women in the Faith which concerneth all . . . as the Apostle saith in the Epistle to Colossians,‡ ' there is neither male nor female,' and therefore wheresoever the wisdom or goodness or power of women be essential to the treating of faith . . . a woman must not be excluded."
>
> " DISCIPLE : I esteem this assertion concerning women (who, according to St. Paul, may not teach) to be so unreasonable that I will treat of it no more. Let us therefore dismiss the matter."

The disciple's view would be the general one of the time, but it is remarkable that any man should have suggested such an innovation in the fourteenth century.

One of the great services which Catholicism rendered to womanhood was through the homage paid to the Virgin, Mary the Divine. Taine speaks of her as the " Queen of Heaven, that supreme Lady, the lovely and holy Virgin, who was the veritable God of the Middle Ages," and Apuleius addresses her thus :

* He died in 1349.

† Quoted in *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation*, compiled by G. G. Coulton. See also R. L. Poole's *Illustrations of Mediæval Thought*.

‡ It is really *Galatians*.

"O holy and blessed Dame, the perpetual comfort of human kind, who by thy bounty and grace nourishest all the world, and beareth a great affection to the adversities of the miserable as a loving mother; thou takest no rest, neither art thou idle at any time in giving thy benefits and succouring all men as well on land as sea."*

By raising a woman to the position of goddess, by reverencing her qualities and acts, by praying to her and loving her, the Church unconsciously changed the attitude towards the whole sex.† Mariolatry arose gradually and somewhat indirectly,‡ but from the first centuries of Christianity the feminine aspect of life and religion and action was recognised. In the *Apocalypse of the Virgin* the pity natural to womanhood is shown by the pleading of Mary for sinners, though even she only asks that mercy should be extended to Christians. Jesus relieves the stricken souls for a time "because of the prayer of my mother Mary."§ The Gnostics‖ paid due reverence to the essential qualities of both sexes, and much of their writings deal with the Sophia or Wisdom, which is

* In his *Metamorphoseon* XI.

† Lecky also holds this view. He says: "Whatever may be thought of its theological propriety, there can be little doubt that the Catholic reverence for the Virgin has done much to elevate and purify the ideal woman, and to soften the manners of men."—*History of European Morals*, Vol. II.

‡ The first historical mention of direct worship paid to Mary occurs in the works of St. Epiphanius, who died in 403, where he speaks of a heretical sect of women who offered cakes of meal and honey to the Virgin—a transference of worship from Ceres to the Christian goddess.

§ The Apocalypse is given in full in the additional volume of the "Ante-Nicene Christian Library."

‖ Although the Gnostics were eventually looked upon as heretics they inevitably influenced the ideas of the times, and gave their share to the medley of faiths that contributed to what finally became orthodoxy. According to Mr. G. R. S. Mead they were the first Christian theologists. See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*. Gnosticism originated before Christianity, but it assumed a new form in the first and second centuries. Its followers claimed to have mystical knowledge denied to the rest of the world.

feminine. In one of their surviving books, the *Pistis-Sophia** (Faith-Wisdom), the judge of souls is the Virgin of Light attended by her seven handmaids. Mary Magdalene is, throughout this treatise, represented as by far the most spiritual of all the disciples, and the most active in asking questions or interpreting passages in the light of the new teaching.† She is commended for her intuition, and forms a symbolical figure of the womanhood of the period in its search for spiritual truths. Among the Gnostics the Sophia was known by various names. In the *Acts of Thomas* there occur two sacramental invocations, where she is identified with the Holy Spirit, and is addressed as follows :

> " Thou Mother of compassion, come ; come, Spouse of Him, the Man, come, thou Revealer of the mysteries concealed. . . ."

An Ode to Sophia glorifies her in beautiful language, of which the following is a specimen :

> " The Maiden is Light's daughter ; in her the King's radiance is treasured. Majestic her look and delightsome ; in radiant beauty she shineth. Like to spring flowers are her garments, from them streameth scent of sweet odours. . . . Truth crowneth her head ; Joy sports at her feet. . . ."

The fine old Gnostic *Hymn of the Robe of Glory* speaks of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, referring to the last-named as " Queen of the East " ; and among the Logia, or Sayings of the Lord,‡ there is the significant phrase " My mother, the Holy Spirit." In

* C. W. King, *The Gnostics and their Remains*. The *Pistis-Sophia* professes to be a record of the higher teachings of Jesus communicated to his disciples during the eleven years he passed with them after his return from his ascension.

† *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, by G. R. S. Mead.

‡ Collected by Resch, a selection of which are translated in *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*.

the Apocryphal *Gospel of the Hebrews* Christ also speaks of the Holy Ghost as his mother. The passage is quoted by Origen :*

> " My mother, the Holy Spirit, took me a moment ago by one of my hairs, and carried me away to the great Mount Tabor."

Other names in use for Mary were the Shining Mother, the Power Above, the Virgin, the Daughter of Light, Merciful Mother, Perfect Mercy, the All-Mother, the Divine Mother of All. Such deification of the feminine principle was a precursor of the more concrete worship of Mary, and its non-survival may be due to its very vagueness ; like other Gnostic doctrines, it was too abstract and remote to appeal to the popular mind, but it illustrated the presence of a sense that in creation and the ruling of the world the masculine was accompanied by the feminine.

One of the greatest influences in the growth of the cult of the Divine Mary was the widespread worship of Isis with her son Horus, and the devotion was transferred to the mother of Jesus.

> " We see then throughout the Roman world the popular worship of the Queen of Heaven, *Mater Dolorosa*, Mother of God, patroness of sailors, and her infant son Horus the child, the benefactor of men, who took captive all the powers of evil. And this worship spread and increased in Egypt and elsewhere until the growing power of Christianity compelled a change. The old worship continued ; for the Syrian maid became transformed into an entirely different figure, Queen of Heaven, Mother of God, patroness of sailors, occupying the position and attributes already belonging to the world goddess ; and the Divine Teacher, the Man of Sorrows, became transformed into the entirely different figure of the Potent Child. Isis and Horus still ruled the affections and worship of Europe with a change of names."†

* In his Commentary in *Joan. II*, Vol. IV. Also see J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

† *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, by W. M. Flinders Petrie.

But to regard the development as merely one of change of names does not give an adequate explanation, for the Mary of Christendom is undoubtedly an individual figure, a creation of Christianity, endowed with more intellect, more sensitiveness, and belonging to a more advanced civilisation than Isis. The difference is the one between the ideal woman of early Christianity and the ideal woman of the Egypto-Roman type. Comte calls her a " truly poetic result of Catholicism," and a " collective product of the Western genius."

The Catholic worship of Mary became pronounced from the fourth century onwards, and she is thenceforward referred to as the Blessed Virgin and the Mother of God. Festivals dedicated to her were established, such as the Feast of the Annunciation, the Feast of Purification or Candlemas,* the Ascension of Mary, and her Birthday,† and " high above all saints and martyrs was the rapturous adoration of the Queen of Heaven."‡ Churches were erected in her honour all over Western Europe, and every church, whoever was its patron saint, had at least a chapel consecrated to Our Lady.

Recent researches§ have shown how the cult of the Blessed Virgin penetrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), which was in caravan communication with the Near East and Jerusalem, and in touch with the Coptic‖ tradition. Ethiopic records give legends of Mary, " the seat of the flame whose name is Emmanuel," of her miracles, and of her mother, who is called Hanna

* Both introduced in the Calendar about the fifth century.
† About the seventh century.
‡ *The Rise of the Mediæval Church*, by A. C. Flick.
§ Made by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, published early in 1923.
‖ The Coptic Church was the native Christian Church of Egypt.

and with whom is associated a reverence for old age.*

The illuminated missals of the Middle Ages picture the reverence and ceremonial given to Mary by the royal state and gorgeous garments that are hers. A tragic interest attaches itself to an old Byzantine picture of the Virgin and Child that was enshrined in the Polish church of Czenstochowa, and that was the object of countless pilgrimages. It is supposed to be one of the oldest pictures in Christendom, and the value placed on it was expressed by its splendid frame of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, topazes, and pearls, with a background of beaten gold; within is the small, almost black, square and a dim, shadowy image of the "Little Mother" and Child. So sacred and beloved was it that it became known as "the Heart of the Heart of Poland." The Germans, on their invasion of the country in 1915, sent the picture to Berlin.†

Mere mention is sufficient of religious art, where the favourite subject is the Madonna, and where the reverence paid to her culminated in the Italian painters, with Raphael's Sistine Madonna in its serene majesty. Nothing could reveal more completely the homage that was considered her due than some paintings of the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin.‡ Reminiscent of the Gnostic Sophia are pictures of the enthroned Virgin as the type of Heavenly Wisdom,

* See *Legends of Our Lady Mary and Her Mother Hanna*, by E. A. Wallis Budge. They are translated from the Ethiopic MSS. collected by King Theodore at Makdala, and now in the British Museum.

† An account is given by F. W. Bailey in the *Fortnightly Review*, for September, 1915.

‡ Representations of these and many others are to be found in Mrs. Jameson's *Legends of the Madonna as represented in the Fine Arts*, which gives an excellent résumé of the subject.

which are found comparatively rarely. Affection as well as homage is expressed by the multitude of representations of episodes in all periods of the Virgin's life, wherein artists idealised maidenhood, womanhood and motherhood.

The worship evoked by so central a figure of the Christian religion as that of Mary, a woman and a mother, and the apotheosis of her womanly qualities, could not but react on all women, whether virgins or mothers, either directly, in manners and modes of thought, or indirectly, in opening more widely avenues hitherto but sparsely entered. It is a fact that queens as rulers occurred more frequently in Christian times than before, and some of them left the mark of their reign deeply impressed on history. Pulcheria,* who alone among the descendants of the great Theodosius appears to have been a worthy successor, ruled for her weak brother, and after his death was publicly acknowledged as Empress by the Romans, and forms a typical instance† of a queen inspired by a Christian ideal. In humbler stations an incident of small importance is significant of the transference of Mary-worship to attentions paid to human women. It was the custom, and is continued to the present day, in Ireland and other Roman Catholic countries, to give presents to the Madonna's namesakes on "Mary-day,"‡ as well as to keep the day as a festival. Every Mary is more honoured on account of the honour paid to the Divine Mary.

* Her full story is to be found in *Women of Christianity*, by Julia Kavanagh.

† She died in 453. For other empresses see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The lives of some are also sketched in Vol. I of Emil Reich's *Woman through the Ages*, but they are not typical of the Roman woman.

‡ August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption.

Legend and poetry are also indicative of a people's attitude and sentiments; and such imaginative compositions are not only moulded by the times in which they appear, but they take a considerable share in themselves moulding the opinions and feelings of those who live within the sphere of their influence. Of Dante's poem Dino Compagni wrote, in speaking of Florence in the Middle Ages, "even the donkey boys sang verses out of Dante." No religious poem has penetrated more deeply into the heart or inspired the imagination more than *The Divine Comedy*, which is essentially a production of Christianity, and mirrors the noblest conception formed at the time of that religion. Here a woman, in the figure of Beatrice, represents spiritual striving; she both guides and encourages the pilgrim on the upward way.

> "To Beatrice on my right I bent,
> Looking for intimation or by word
> Or act, what next behov'd. . . .*
> . . . . . .
> Beatrice upward gaz'd, and I on her."†

Beatrice was not unique except in the fame reflected on her by Dante; other women influenced other men, but the world heard not of them, but their reactions may have been none the less important on the lives they touched, and the same might be said of them as of her in this aspect:

> ". . . though Beatrice did but cross the path of Dante's life and shed her brightness on it for a season from afar, the thought of her had penetrated heart and fibre, making him a man new born through love and striking in his soul a note that should resound through all his years, through all the centuries which grow to understand him."‡

* *Il Paradiso*, Canto XVIII.
† *Il Paradiso*, Canto II.
‡ J. A. Symonds, in *The Renaissance in Italy*.

It was she who taught the poet of the Love

" That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars,"*

and the influence of womanhood is no less highly honoured in *The Divine Comedy* than by the words :

"Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan."†

Dante also glorifies Mary as the *Rosa Mystica* and Queen of Heaven, giving to her attendant angels who adore her, and saints and patriarchs praying to and praising her. His hymn commencing :

" O Virgin-Mother, daughter of thy Son,
Created beings all in lowliness
Surpassing, as in height above them all . . ."‡

can be compared to Chaucer's invocation :

" Lady, thy goodness and thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
Surpass all science, and all utterance ;
For sometimes, Lady ! ere men pray to thee,
Thou goest before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto Thy Son so dear."§

Moreover, as an indication of the manner in which the essence of womanhood was viewed, whether explicitly or not, the poetry of a country or century is peculiarly reliable, in that it expresses feeling, which is nearer to actual reality, rather than intellectual propositions, which are necessarily less spontaneous and more artificial.

But, in a curious contradiction, the tendency of

* Concluding line of *Il Paradiso*.

† " The Eternal Feminine leadeth us on "—the last lines of Goethe's *Faust*, Part II, of which Havelock Ellis says, in *Man and Woman* : " In the saying with which Goethe closed his *Faust* lies a biological verity not usually suspected by those who quote it."

‡ *Il Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII. Carey's translation.

§ From the *Prioress's Tale*, put into modern verse by Wordsworth.

Whatever the numbers were, the persecutions did not proceed without protests from humane persons. Sermons were occasionally preached wherein the absurdity of such credulity was exposed;* some writers derided the supposed power of witches and endeavoured to turn the minds of their readers to a more reasonable view;† and the town council of Nuremberg said that they had "never had much opinion of this witch business for they had always found that it had no foundation." But those who denied belief in witchcraft were liable to be accused of alliance with witches, and therefore not many voices were raised against the horrors perpetrated.

Of these Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettsheim is the best known.‡ He was a friend of Erasmus and wrote a treatise in Latin on the pre-eminence of women over men.§ By Reason, Law, Authority, and the Sacred Scriptures he attempts to prove that women are superior to men. His arguments range over sacred and profane history, introduce most of the famous women then known, including such differing types as Eve, Aspasia, Mary, Cassandra, and Hildegarde. The work is ingenious, and the reasons for certain facts are uncommon. An instance may be quoted—

> "The man knowingly sinned, the woman ignorantly, and erred being deceived. . . . Hence because mankind is condemned for the sin of the man, not the sin of the woman,

* Notably an Easter Sermon by Beerman, a Lutheran pastor.

† Andrew Schoppus, the Lutheran pastor at Wernigerode.

‡ 1486–1535. He once saved the life of a woman whose mother had been burnt as a witch. Through this he lost his post as Town Advocate and Orator at Metz. See Morley's *Life of Cornelius Agrippa.*

§ *De Nobilitate et Praecellentia Feminei Sexus.* English translations, under the titles of *The Glory of Women* and *Female Pre-eminence,* were published in the seventeenth century.

God willed that by the sex which brought sin, in the same sex should expiation be made. And this is why the order of the priesthood is committed to the man rather than to the woman, because every priest represented Christ, and Christ is of the sex of the first sinner, Adam. (Had sin come by the woman then it might well be that Christ would have come in the form of a woman and the priesthood been rather for women.) . . ."

Not for its arguments is the book of value, but as an indication of the fact that, in spite of one section of the community and of Christianity despising and torturing women, another section honoured and appreciated them. Perusal of the witch trials and consideration of the alleged great numbers who suffered by them is apt to lead to the idea that the atmosphere of the time was anti-feminist, but neither a religion nor a nation can be judged by the action of a few who held temporary power, or by the superstitious or the ignorant, without also considering the action and opinion of the remainder. Cornelius Agrippa could not have been solitary in his opinions.

The Reformation was long heralded before the appearance of Luther, and the "Morning Star of the Reformation"* had, in England, obtained a company of followers that prepared the way for changes. Lollardry† lived and worked its way throughout two centuries before the state-ordained Reformation, and it is of interest to note that one Lollard sect ordained women,‡ which proves to us they also shared in the reform of their faith. A similar spirit is shown among the Albigenses,§ a heretical

* Wyclif.

† An exhaustive account appears in *Lollardry and the Reformation in England*, by James Gairdner.

‡ *Journal of Education*, June, 1909.

§ So called from the district of Albi in the South of France, where they were numerous.

sect flourishing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and much persecuted by Pope Innocent III and others. Here the opinions spread to a great extent through the apostleship of women.* With them are often confused the Waldenses, followers of Peter Waldo,† who were excommunicated and persecuted, and of whom Milton wrote his sonnet commencing—

> "Avenge, O Lord! thy slaughtered Saints whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
> Even them that kept thy truth so pure of old.
> When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
> Forget not: In thy book record their groans
> Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
> Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
> Mother with infant down the rocks. . . ."

At the present time, the Waldenses possess the same religious and political rights as Roman Catholics in Italy, and the struggle for their existence and for their rights has throughout been helped by women, who preached their faith and suffered persecution in company with men.‡

Protestantism exerted a twofold influence on women: in removing from her the detailed guidance and dominance of the priesthood it gave her opportunity for more independence of thought and action; but in accentuating the text of the Bible above tradition and the development of institutions, it tended to establish Old Testament ideas anent her position, and to treat what had grown by means of human effort with scant reverence. Woman is, on the whole, more conservatively minded than man,§ and whatever

* *The Women of the Renaissance*, by R. de M. la Claviere.

† A citizen of Lyons living in the latter half of the twelfth century,

‡ See H. C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*. Vol. II.

§ See *Man and Woman*, by Havelock Ellis.

destroys, appeals to her less than that which constructs. To the former class belongs Protestantism, as its very name attests; its watchword might be liberty, as loyalty might be that of Catholicism, though these terms are to be regarded neither as mutually exclusive, nor as comprehensive.* The mistake made by the Reformers was that they did not reform systems but demolished them. Monasticism perhaps suffered most; and in this sphere, women suffered more than men, for the suppression of convents deprived women of any outlet for their activities beyond homemaking. Asceticism had perverted some of the springs of energy that fed the streams of conventual life, and without reform the system was doomed. But instead of regeneration from within, came demolition from without. It is true that attempts at reform were made at famous convents—the rule of Mere Angelique† at Port Royal is a noted instance, both of what could be accomplished by an abbess possessing common sense and of the difficulties which surrounded any such attempts. She discerned that asceticism in itself was useless, and directed the activities of her nuns to charities, with the consequence that Port Royal was a comfort to many, especially in war time. From the history of monasticism can be culled other lesser instances which were disregarded by those who saw in the past nothing but mistakes.

Women obtained but little encouragement from the great reformers to enter any larger spheres than

* For an excellent comparison between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in their effect on national characteristics, see Lecky's *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, Chapter V.

† Lived at beginning of seventeenth century. She was appointed abbess in 1599 at the age of seven. An account of her life and work, drawn from her own writings and those of her nuns, is given in *The Nuns of Port Royal*, by M. E. Lowndes.

those of wifehood and motherhood. Even the heroic Bruno with his poetic philosophy and imagination said: "I allow woman to learn; to teach, never." And the scholarly Erasmus with his balanced temperament quoted approvingly the text that Christ is head of the man, and man of the woman, adding: "'Tis against nature for a woman to have rule over males." Luther, the fearless and robust monk, could brook no woman away from her home, and was even willing to permit polygamy:

> "It is impossible for me to condemn a man for having more than one wife at one time, seeing that the Holy Scriptures do not forbid it."

This was depending on the written word of bygone centuries, without allowing for any growth in human ideas or morals. He considered that women were mistresses and queens in the home* and their talk should be of household affairs.

> "But take them from their housewifery and they are good for nothing. . . . Woman is born to manage a household, 'tis her lot, her law of nature: man is born for law and polity, to administer and govern states."

Education for women he discouraged: "No gown worse becomes a woman than the desire to be wise," and in more brutal vein he said, "If a woman becomes weary or at last dead from bearing that matters not, let her only die from bearing, she is there to do it." But such remarks do not express his opinion of women fully. To a woman he owed care and succour when he was a poor student, and thinking of Ursula Cotta, he wrote "There is nothing on earth more beautiful than a woman's heart in which piety has taken up its

* Essentially a Jewish ideal.

abode." And of his wife, Katherine von Bora, he says, "I would not exchange my poverty with her for all the riches of Croesus without her," and also, "I love my Kethe more than I do myself for I would die rather than harm should happen to her or her children."

John Knox vented his anger against women who ruled* and attempted to prove from classical writers, Roman law, the Bible, and the Christian fathers, that women were unfitted for governing. He says† in his vigorous way—

> "By the order of Nature, by the malediction and curse pronounced against women by the mouth of St. Paul, the interpreter of God's sentence; by the example of that commonwealth in which God by his word planted order and policy; and finally by the most godly writers, God hath dejected woman from rule, dominion, empire, and authority above man. . . . Moreover seeing that neither the example of Deborah, neither the law made for the daughters of Zelophehad, neither yet the foolish consent of an ignorant multitude, be able to justify that which God so plainly hath condemned, let all men take heed what quarrel and cause from henceforth they defend. If God raise up any noble heart to vindicate the liberty of his country, and to suppress the monstrous empire of women, let all such as shall presume to defend them on the same, most certainly know that in so doing, they lift their hand against God, and that one day they shall find his power fighting against their foolishness."

Henry VIII ordered that no woman was to read the Bible which was chained in every church unless a man were by to explain it to her,‡ an act indicative of his general attitude towards women. But in spite of such hindrances and opinions, women fulfilled their share in the work of the Reformation. Anne Askew insisted on expounding the Bible openly and

* Elizabeth in England, Mary in Scotland, Catherine di Medici in France.

† In *The Monstrous Regimen of Women.*

‡ Selden's *Table Talk.*

was a martyr for her beliefs.* The women victims in Mary's reign suffered as courageously as did the men, and helped to light the candle of which Latimer spoke; while the tragic figure of Mary herself shows woman clinging loyally to old forms, though failing to preserve them. When, before becoming queen, she was summoned before the Council of Edward VI, for continuing to hear Mass, she answered that "her soul was God's and her faith she would not change, nor dissemble her opinion with contrary doings."†

Yet another type appears in Margaret Roper, who comforted the last days of her father, Sir Thomas More, and who is worthy to stand by the side of the other great women of the Renaissance for her learning and courage. And no lack is there of similar characters; high-souled women endowed with intellect, and changing, either directly or indirectly, the course of events. Anne Bacon, the mother of Francis Bacon; Mildred Burleigh, the wife of Elizabeth's minister, Lady Rachel Russell, who vainly exerted all the pressure possible in order to save her husband from the injustice of his sentence; all these are names that recall deeds of Christian women whose religion was real to them.

On the Continent, during the stormy times of the early Reformation, the story of Sibylla of Cleves‡ and her husband, the Elector of Saxony, is one of brave resistance to the Emperor on account of her faith.§ In later years, a notable figure was Jeanne

* She was tortured and burnt as a heretic in Henry VIII's reign.

† From the Journal of Edward VI for March, 1550, given in *Leading Documents of English History*, by G. C. Lee.

‡ Elder sister of Anne of Cleves.

§ For an account of her life and that of other women, mostly of high rank, of her time, see *Notable Women of the Reformation*, by W. Chapman, which, though one-sided in view, gives reliable information.

d' Albret, Queen of Navarre, daughter of Margaret of France and mother of Henry of Navarre (who became Henry IV of France), she was the teacher and inspirer of the young Huguenot leader, and from her he inherited his intellect, his nobility of character, and his Protestant belief. Previous to the Huguenot massacre in France, many French heretics had been imprisoned and burnt in several districts, and women were not spared.* Of the Huguenots who escaped to England and settled in the country many were women and they introduced methods of lace-making, weaving, etc., and formed an industrious and intelligent section of the community.

On the question of marriage Protestantism wrought some changes. It declined to regard the act as either a sacrament or a concession to human weakness, but it considered the married state as the most desirable one for mankind. That opinion in itself would tend to raise womanhood; and the abolition of celibacy for the clergy would banish the implication that the state of marriage was inferior to that of a single life. On the other hand the Old Testament theory that made the husband the absolute head was revived, and it may account for the promise to obey exacted from the wife in the marriage service of the English Church. Unequal vows are found only in the rites of Britain and part of Germany, and those not till late in mediæval times. The compilers of the English prayer book in Edward VI's reign adopted the Sarum model, but in the Orthodox Eastern Church, and in the majority of Western rites, both ancient and modern, including the present Roman ceremony, the same question is

* In *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve*, by Henry White, there occurs a sketch of the early religious persecution in France.

put to the man and woman, and she gives the same marriage vow. Subordination of the wife is most strongly expressed in the service books of the Dutch Calvinists.

The tendency to treat marriage more as a civil contract raised the possibility of divorce, and to allow it at all was a point gained towards greater freedom. And divorce having once become possible, there were introduced further problems, such as the questions regarding sufficiency of cause for divorce, the maintenance of the wife, and the disposal of the children, all of which are difficulties remaining to be solved by the twentieth century, though first brought to practical issues by the division in Christianity.

With the more human view of marriage there went also very vigorous treatment of sexual irregularity of any kind, and greater intolerance was felt for all "sins of the flesh." The same difference of view can still be detected by comparing the attitude shown towards irregular unions by the Northern Protestant nations, and the Southern Catholic ones. Catholicism, while condemning, yet extended an understanding and pardon that the more inflexible Protestantism often refused.

Non-appreciation of the past, which was one characteristic of early Protestantism, subtly militated against women's instincts, and the loss of reverence for traditions and institutions had the same effect, so that womanhood, if not individual women, was relegated to a less prominent position in the scheme of life outlined by Protestants. Their insistence on reason and depreciation of feeling was also the manifestation of a masculine rather than feminine attitude, and tended to reduce the influence of woman's

inclinations and intuitions. Thus the general effect of the Reformation on women was a complex one ; in some ways, such as the dissolution of the monastic system, it deprived them of a sphere of work ; in others, such as the point of view taken with regard to marriage, it elevated their sex ; and yet in other more subtle ways, such as the instances given of belitting the past and over-exaggerating the value of reason, it closed invisible avenues of influence. Only woman herself, reacting on the circumstances, could decide what the changed religion was able to do for her, and how she in her turn could modify it. But in this reaction woman was deprived of the auspices of the mediæval goddess whom Protestantism had dethroned. For with the lowering of dignity suffered by the Divine Mary came a correspondingly altered attitude towards her sex, unconscious it probably was, yet inevitable. Henceforth Christianity flowed in two streams, wide apart at first, but gradually nearing as the centuries passed, with the result that at the present day similarities are regarded rather than differences.* In both streams women kept their way, whether by carrying on the traditions and extending the activities of Catholicism, or by breaking away from worn out forms and following new channels of thought and work.

However, the methods by which women worked or expressed themselves were changed. What is, perhaps, one of the noblest communities ever founded was inspired by Vincent de Paul† who embodied his idea in his Company of Sisters of Charity. His own

* Notice such meetings as the Conference of Religious Thinkers, which held its fourth annual conference at Caxton Hall in June, 1923.

† He died in 1660. For his work and life see *Vincent de Paul*, by E. K. Sanders.

description of the society indicates its scope and aims:

> "A community who have no monastery but the houses of the sick, who have for cells only a lodging or the poorest room, whose chapel is the Parish Church, who have the streets for cloisters. They are enclosed only by obedience, they make the fear of God their *grille*, and they have no veil but their own modesty. . . . There is this difference between the Sister of Charity and a Religious, that while for the Religious the one aim is the attainment of Perfection for herself, the object of the Sister of Charity is the comfort and salvation of her neighbour."

The members of the community were women of the working class (many of them could not read), but their duties, combining those of the modern parish nurse and mission woman, were fulfilled in a manner superior to that of the Ladies of Charity, who were established later. Vincent de Paul always considered the lower middle class the most useful. During war, the Sisters organised relief for famine and plague, and served in military hospitals. Even with no possibility of reward for its service the vitality of the Community extended, so that the Sisters of Charity became known throughout Paris. A teacher and organiser in the person of Madame Le Gras had been appointed; her devotion stood the test of years, and was actuated by love towards her Church and religion, and by her admiration for the founder of the Community. Through her suggestion Conferences of the Sisters were held at which Vincent de Paul spoke, advised, and issued instructions. Companionship of work undertaken by a man and woman, exemplified by the example just quoted, is common throughout the history of Christianity, and such work accomplishes more and extends farther than that undertaken by

one sex alone. Similar to Madame Le Gras is Madame de Chantal, grandmother of the gifted Madame de Sévigné, and friend of Francis de Sales; she founded at his suggestion a community for charity; and searchers through the annals of the Army of Succour can find other common work undertaken by the two sexes with mutual help and interest. The nearest Protestant counterpart to the Sisterhood of Vincent de Paul is the institution at Kaiserwerth, where Florence Nightingale was trained, and where are established a home for the infirm, hospitals and asylums, an orphanage for girls, and a refuge for convicts, as well as training institutes of various kinds. Much of the extensive help given to the poor for their amelioration, rather than for the abolition of poverty, has originated in Church activities. Throughout this sphere women have provided the major exertions, if not by initiating methods of relief, at least by carrying out what was proposed. Not connected with Christianity, but germane to the idea of sisterhood, and formed by the twentieth century sisters of the women who served their neighbours, are the many Women's Clubs established in the United States, the members of which interest themselves in civic duties and social work.

If *construction* of ideals, traditions, and avenues of activity, was the main contribution of Catholicism, the *preparation* of the site of the human soul for a more spacious edifice of religion, opening out to all parts of the universe, welcoming within its portals all races of the world, and having room for freedom of movement, has been the supreme task of Protestantism, which was not a new religion, but an unconscious herald announcing the advent of the

final comprehensive faith,* and first releasing the mind from fetters. To this message of deliverance the various aspects of Nonconformity contributed their share, also without realising whither they tended. Here women underwent the preliminary hardships necessary in all reforms, and spread their convictions with enthusiasm.

Jenny Geddes is honoured in Scotland for her vigorous protest in St. Giles Church, Edinburgh, at the introduction of Episcopacy, a protest that was followed by the establishment and signing of the National Covenant.† And the monument near Wigtown, dedicated to two Margarets, the young Margaret Wilson and the elder Margaret McLauchlan, keeps green the memory of their martyrdom during the persecution of the Covenanters, when they were tied to stakes at low tide and drowned for refusing to give up their faith.‡ The annals of Nonconformity has many such in its pages. A noble story is that of Elizabeth Bunyan,§ the simple peasant woman, whose courage and fidelity served her husband during the persecution which he suffered for over twelve years. And the women characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* are but portraits of English women living at Bedford in the seventeenth century: Charity in the House Beautiful, who advised the pilgrim to gain the confidence of his children, is an average sensible and kind Englishwoman; the young girl Mercy,

* "Faith in Human Nature," and all that that phrase implies, is one way of naming it.

† In 1639, after Archbishop Laud's order for the Prayer Book to be used in all Scottish churches.

‡ On May 11th, 1685. Millais has made the younger woman the subject of one of his pictures.

§ John Bunyan was twice married; through the influence of his first wife he was converted. Elizabeth was the second, and she mothered his five children during her attempts to obtain his release.

accompanying and helping Christiana, depicts the serious maid of the time; Christian's wife herself is a product of Puritanism, who "called her children together" and led them. Just as the events in *Vanity Fair* are pictures of the scandalous trials in Bunyan's day, so are the women in his book the same as those he encountered in his own pilgrimage. Mrs. Timorous and Madame Bubble indicate other types, undecided or frivolous, and each unhelpful. Bunyan's characters are all human, and, if their sentiments are not now timely, they were sincere in the seventeenth century.

The notorious Judge Jeffreys was responsible for the death of a Baptist woman who had anticipated the work of Elizabeth Fry by devoting herself to the visitation of criminals in prison; she had sheltered a fugitive after the Duke of Monmouth's rising,* who, in order to save his own life, had betrayed her. Like the more well-known Alice Lisle, she was sentenced to be burned, and in her case the sentence was carried out without commutation to beheading. That these two women were Nonconformists militated against them in Jeffreys' eyes, which saw nothing but "lying knaves" in "those snivelling canting Presbyterians."†

A woman was the real originator of the Wesleyan movement, and the mother of John and Charles Wesley has often been called the Mother of Methodism; her insistence on method in daily life and its duties was the beginning of the religious habits of her son and his followers. She herself, married to a Church of England clergyman, inaugurated meetings for the parishioners in the vicarage, and held her way when

* Quelled by the rout at Sedgemoor in 1685.

† His own words during the Bloody Assizes, after which he was appointed Lord Chancellor.

her husband and his curate remonstrated. Not only did her two most distinguished children learn order in life from her, but they inherited also her sane common sense, her power of organisation, her preference for simplicity, and her strong will. Almost contemporary with Mrs. Wesley there worked the Countess of Huntingdon, of whom Newman said that she was "a person simply and unconditionally giving up this world for the next," and into her sphere of society she attempted to bring some sincerity of life and realisation of common humanity.

Among the Primitive Methodists one of the most attractive movements is that initiated by Mary Thorne by the spontaneous declaration of her conversion at the close of a service in Shebbear Church, Devonshire.* She and her husband were founders of the Bible Christian denomination, a conspicuous feature of which was the great number of women evangelists who worked in it with devotion and courage.

> "The most adventurous and intrepid missionaries of the good cause were women. To the Scilly Isles, to the Channel Islands, to the Isle of Wight, to London, and even to far Northumberland, women evangelists carried the message and were singularly successful in most instances in securing a foothold for the Connexion. Some of their experiences were romantic and thrilling. They were almost penniless, throwing themselves upon the generosity of the people; they endured fatigues and faced perils from which men might have shrunk. No hardship of the journey daunted them if the choice lay between obedience and disobedience to the heavenly visions. Through weakness, sickness, and exhaustion they persevered often with a courage at which we, in our unheroic days, can only marvel, and with a devotion that puts our modern lukewarms to shame.

* An account of Mary Thorne and her husband, with the widespread effects of their evangelising campaign, is given in *The History of the Free Churches*, by C. Silvester Horne.

Perhaps their truest successors have been found among the most consecrated of the ' lasses ' of the Salvation Army."*

The prototype of Dinah Morris was a woman of this kind; and their number was in all likelihood greater than the absence of particular names would seem to indicate. Hannah More,† though not so evangelical as the Wesleyans, was probably influenced by the revival passing over England, and her establishment of schools in the mining region of the Mendips is a parallel action to the care extended by the Methodists to the neglected villagers and poorer classes.

The band of Quaker women form a noble company, who suffered intensely for their faith together with their men-companions, and who have always possessed the equal privilege of speaking at meetings—the Inner Light knows no distinction of sex. One of the first women sufferers under the persecution of the Friends was Elizabeth Stirredge‡ who was imprisoned more than once; but the "Boston martyrs,"§ men and women who were scourged through various towns for expressing their religious opinions, are the most well known, together with Mary Fisher, who is reported to have visited and been courteously received by the Sultan, Mohammed IV.‖ Certain Baptist churches in Holland are thought to have originated the practice of women preaching. George Fox noticed that "many more of their women do venture to preach among the Baptists than among the Brownists in

* *History of the Free Churches.*

† 1745–1833.

‡ Her life is sketched in *Annals of the Early Friends*, by Frances A. Budge.

§ Bowden's *History of the Society of Friends in America.*

‖ For a comprehensive view of Quaker women see Mrs. Brailsford's *Quaker Women.*

was probably due in part to the great number who entered it, sometimes without the true vocation. Some of the writings of Erasmus* exhibit this tendency, and though he says nothing derogatory to women, yet he implies that domestic concerns are best for their happiness. The dissolution of the monasteries was brought about by a complex of causes, which those who suppressed them were not willing to divulge: as "garrisons of the Pope" † they were not tolerated in countries which were turning away from Roman Catholicism, and as storehouses of treasure and wealth they were desired by unscrupulous rulers.‡ Social, economic, and political conditions, as well as some corruption, brought about the downfall of the monastic system, and with it there crashed one sphere of women's energies, as well as much of women's property. There were no corresponding schools for girls established when grammar schools for boys were founded to replace monastic teaching; no bishoprics could be given to abbesses, as they were to abbots, as compensation for the loss of their former position. In the greater number of instances, when property was confiscated from women's convents, its use was appropriated by men. Even Margaret Beaufort, the mother of the English Henry VII, and the other noble ladies § who founded colleges at Cambridge and Oxford, made no foundations for women. But the influence of the monastic systems had permeated mediæval Europe, and it must be regarded as one of the civilising factors which had no small share in

* Notably *The Penitent Virgin, The Uneasy Wife, The Young Man and the Harlot, The Assembly of Women.*

† So called by Thomas Cromwell.

‡ This was also the reason most of the gilds of the Middle Ages were dissolved.

§ See Gray's *Installation Ode.*

moulding the habits of thought and morality of its time; it was a great social force exerting itself, in the ultimate balance of results, towards the uplift of humanity, and therefore of woman.

Together with the cloister went the castle, and the feudal system, governed by, or struggling with, the church, was inevitably affected by Christianity, usually in the direction of spirituality and gentleness. The feudal baron restrained his fierceness in the presence of the altar, and the acknowledgment of the right of sanctuary is in itself a witness to the power of the Church. The great ramifications of the spirit of chivalry were guided and hallowed by the church; the perfect knight was a perfect Christian. The Crusades were instituted by the church, and taking the Cross was an adventurous quest that also breathed sanctity. And never had there been a time when women nominally received more homage and devotion than in the age of chivalry. Honour, religion, and gallantry became the motive forces of the knight's life, and modern courtesy is the remnant of that exaggerated reverence which prevailed. Of course there was much artificiality and insincerity; courtesy was above truth, and a deviation from the expected course on the part of women revealed how thin was the crust of homage, and brought to light the fact that a conventional type was exalted; and the praise really caused a certain restraint, to which, however, women readily submitted, and themselves elaborated it with prohibitions. The lives of ordinary men and women were but little affected by the artificial adjuncts of chivalry, which were connected with wealth and rank, and bound only those living in high social strata. Similarly any power accruing to women did so only to

those possessing land or wealth: the unmarried English woman on attaining her majority had a claim to all the legal rights her brother possessed.* Women's right of inheritance was strengthened by the help of the church† probably from interested motives; but the result was beneficial whatever the motive. The economic factor appears also in the method of considering the joining of lands rather than the union of personalities when marriages were arranged. Great ladies received homage, but they must follow the dictates of convenience rather than of their hearts, when the two clashed. Among the serfs, the commands of their lord were paramount, and though their condition was an improvement on slavery, yet the treatment meted to them, especially to the women, in Christian countries, proves that chivalry was a respect and ideal of class rather than sex, and that unprivileged men suffered with women. As late as the nineteenth century in Russia serfs were forced to marry according to their master's choice,‡ and this is probably a survival of what happened throughout Western Europe five or six centuries before. But there appears to be no evidence of the custom which is alleged to have existed in mediæval Europe giving the overlord the *right* to the virginity of his vassals' daughters on their wedding night, a right known as the *jus primæ noctis* or *Droit du Seigneur*, the existence of which would imply undoubted inferiority in the status of woman as a sex. That some such abuse of power was occasionally exercised by brutal nobles is very probable, but the *Jus* was a myth invented in

* For a full account of the privileges of Englishwomen throughout the history of England see *British Freewomen*, by Mrs. C. C. Stopes.

† See *The Growth of the Manor*, by Dr. P. Vinogradoff.

‡ Accounts of such happenings are given in Prince Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist.*

the sixteenth or seventeenth century. A religious custom was established by the Council of Carthage* by which the faithful followers of the Church were required to observe continence on their wedding night, and this was sometimes known as the Droit du Seigneur, or God's Right. The fact that the overlord exacted feudal dues on the marriage of his vassals and their children, added to this religious abstention, gave rise to the belief that the *Jus* was an established custom.†

It was from among the poorest class that one of the greatest figures of the Middle Ages arose; a figure which impresses the imagination, and has become viewed in a perspective, that, while seeming to exalt her, in reality detracts from her courage and virtue. Jeanne d'Arc has been eulogised in the extravagant way that appertains to the praises of saints ‡ while her human qualities have remained those of a patriotic, high-souled and fearless maiden, convinced that she had a great mission to perform, and exerting her powers to the utmost in order to perform it. She was successful, but never knew it. Her voices and visions are essentially those of Christianity in mediæval Europe, when saintship was accompanied by ecstasies and supernormal phenomena. But the Maid possessed more than visions; her valiant heart, her persistence, and her sincerity made her more noble than those she led; her religion sustained her, though its fol-

* In 398.

† An article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* shows that there is no trustworthy evidence of the custom in a legalised form.

‡ She fascinated Mark Twain into writing a serious book that is of the greatest interest; he considered her the most wonderful person who had ever lived on this planet. See his *Joan of Arc*, supposed to be recollections written by her secretary. Louis Kossuth remarks that no other person at the age of seventeen held the office of Commander-in-Chief of an army.

lowers brought about her death; and her love of country inspired not only herself, but the France who lived after her, to a loyalty for *la patrie* that, as M. Anatole France says, justly made her its symbol.* Her actions were the product of the religious atmosphere of the time and of her own ardent nature, which expended itself, as did those of Catherine of Siena, Teresa, and many another, on a cause, instead of in the ordinary life of a woman. For Jeanne d'Arc's character was not unique; circumstances brought her to the fore, but in her century, as well as before and after, women such as she must have lived, with ideals and strivings, and powers fitted and ready for noble deeds; in the same way Florence Nightingale is a type of many other nineteenth century women, uniting in her life not only will and ability but also opportunity and realisation. Human nature in general is greater than we know.

The death of Jeanne d'Arc pictures the fact that the Church was the dominant factor in the life of the Middle Ages. Mistakes it made, and cruelties it committed, but in the annals of civilisation must be noted the undoubted influence exerted by mediæval religion in Europe. The Church "fashioned laws and dictated the policy of governments; it controlled education and intelligence; it influenced occupations and industries; it moulded social ideas and customs; and it set the standards of morality and determined the life and conduct of both this world and that to come."† In the thirteenth century a magnificent

* In the introduction to his *Life of Joan of Arc*, an eminently sane account that renders her admiration as a human being. Mr. Andrew Lang, on the other hand, considered her, "in a sense not easily defined . . . inspired . . . of the highest genius and of the noblest character."—See his *Maid of France*.

† *The Rise of the Mediæval Church*, by A. C. Flick.

cathedral was built at Chartres.* For many years before its completion, men and women could be seen yoked to carts which were filled with building materials from distant quarries; others worked devotedly at the building itself. These things are symbolic, for just as women as well as men toiled to make the cathedral worthy and beautiful for their common use and worship, so women as well as men spent their energies in constructing the vast edifice of Christianity that gave shelter and shadow, a method of approaching ideals and a centre of reverence, through the centuries.

* It was begun in 1194 and finished in 1240.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIANITY—II

The Renaissance—woman availed herself of her opportunities. —Vittoria Colonna, Margaret of France, and other great ladies.—Decline of the ideal of virginity.—History of witch-burning.—Henry Cornelius Agrippa and his views on women.—The Reformation—Lollardry—the Albigenses and Waldenses—women's share in teaching.—Protestantism—twofold influence on women—removed her from dominance of priesthood but accentuated text of Bible.—Luther's opinions of woman's sphere.—John Knox and his *Monstrous Regimen of Women*.—Various women of the Reformation in England and the Continent.—Marriage and divorce—rigorous treatment of sexual irregularity.—Complex effect of Reformation on woman's position. Methods by which women worked and changed opinions.—Communities—Vincent de Paul and his women helpers. —Other sisterhoods.—Puritan women—*Pilgrim's Progress* and its portraits.—Wesleyan women.—The Bible Christian denominations.—Noble company of Quaker women.—The Quietists.—Salvation Army and its lassies.—The Doukhobors.—Some types of Christian women in nineteenth century—many other forces guiding and inspiring them; missionaries, women of the Empire, teachers, nurses, social workers, poets and writers, women ministers, etc. —Guilds and societies.—Older Christianity out of touch with modern problems—loss of influence of theology.—Function of the world religion of the future—woman's share in it.

FORCES were set free by the Renaissance, impulses were given, and avenues opened that inevitably affected women as well as men. The old Greek and Roman culture was mingled with Christianity, and the result was an atmosphere which

retained the dignity and calm of the Greek tragedians, together with the more sympathetic elements of the Christian religion. The desire for learning was a distinct advance on the semi-contempt in which it had been held; and the opportunities for acquiring it were manifold. That woman availed herself of the opportunities, without, in many cases, leaving her Christian beliefs or piety, can be seen by a mere quotation of the famous names of women living in the Renaissance age and under its influence. In France, Italy, Spain, Germany and England the sixteenth century is noted for women of learning, who drank of knowledge because they desired it, and who therefore tasted of its freshness, and its power to expand the mind, to a degree that the examination-haunted students of to-day less often attain.

Virgil, Horace, Dante, and Petrarch were studied by girls in Italy, and Dolce* said that a liberal education was most surely calculated to form strong souls. Practically the same education was given to women as men, since it was thought that the same intellectual and emotional development perfected both man and woman. The function of woman was to influence distinguished men and to moderate man's impulses and caprice; and the highest praise that could be given to a woman was to say she had the mind and courage of a man. And this was true of many women—

> "In Italy, throughout the whole of the fifteenth century, the wives of the rulers, and still more those of the Condottieri, have nearly all a distinct recognisable personality, and take their share of notoriety and glory."†

* Ludovic Dolce (1508–1568), Italian writer of Venice, author of seventy works.

† J. Burckhardt, in *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy.*

To recognise that girls needed education equally with boys was an advance, but it remained for a further advance to see the subtle distinctions of mind and feeling due to sex, and the corresponding differences that should appear in the education of each.

That outstanding figure among women of the Renaissance, Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara, represented scores of lesser women similar to her in tastes and ideals. She was known as the Mother of the Church, and a prayer of hers sufficiently attests her orthodoxy—

> "Grant, I beseech thee, Lord, that by the humility that becomes the creature, and by the pride thy greatness demands, I may adore thee always, and that in the fear thy justice imposes, as in the hope thy clemency justifies, I may live eternally, and submit to thee as the Almighty, follow thee as the All-wise, and turn towards thee as towards Perfection and Goodness. I beseech thee, most tender Father, that thy living fire may purify me, thy radiant light illumine me; that this sincere love for thee may profit me in such wise that, never finding let or hindrance in things of this world, I may return to thee in happiness and safety."*

Though she never adopted Protestantism she worked to bring back the Church to purer morals and evangelical simplicity.† She studied the classics, arranged for lectures at Naples and Rome, and was foremost in forwarding culture in Italy. In the world of letters and art there was no one who was not proud to be thought her friend, and the sympathy and affection she gave to Michael Angelo inspired him with an ideal of woman that can be observed in much of his work.‡ The women around him with their greatness of soul,

* Quoted in *Women of the Renaissance*, by R. de Maulde la Claviere. The book gives a discursive account of women in France and Italy during the Renaissance period.

† See J. A. Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*.

‡ She died in 1547, aged fifty-seven.

exhibited the traits which he exalted in the sublime figures wrought by him. Condivi said of Michael Angelo that "her death left him oftentimes astonied and as it were deprived of reason." Francesco d'Olanda,* who visited her, said—

> "Madonna Vittoria Colonna, Marchioness of Pescara, is one of the most excellent and famous women of Europe—that is, of the whole civilised world. Not less chaste than beautiful, learned in Latin literature and full of genius, she possesses all the qualities and virtues that are praiseworthy in woman. . . . To the poor she is beneficent and a model of true Catholic devotion."

Other women of Italy had similar influence: a friend of Vittoria Colonna's, Veronica Gambaza, was a poetess who wrote verses of some merit, but her fame rested more on her personality than her poetry. A biographer† of the sixteenth century says—

> "The House of Veronica was an Academy where every day she gathered round her for discourse on noble questions, Bembo and Capello, Molza and Manso, and all the famous men of Europe who followed the Italian courts."

Bandello, in his novels, pictures the ease and dignity, the intellectual freedom and wit, the grace and kindliness of these great ladies, the centres of cultured circles, illustrious and honoured. His patroness was Isabella Gonzaga of Mantua.‡ She and her husband were Italian patriots, and from her letters she is seen to have been a woman of unshaken firmness, full of kindliness and humorous observation. Bembo, Bandello, Ariosto, and Bernardo Lasso sent their works to this court, for, though it was small, powerless, and

* A Portuguese artist of the sixteenth century.
† Rinaldo Corso.
‡ She lived in the second half of the fifteenth century.

poor, yet a more polished and charming circle could not be found in Italy.*

Names might be multiplied and the stories of the great families to which these women belonged have often been told.† It must always be remembered, however, that these illustrate the life of the upper aristocratic class, which was only a small minority, but its ideals influenced, to a limited extent, the thoughts and aspirations of those lower in the social scale. A writer‡ of the time assigns the spheres of man and woman thus—

> "Man has for his portion physical strength: all doing must be his; all inspiration must come from women. . . . Without women nothing is possible, either in military courage, or art, or poetry, or music, or philosophy, or even religion: God is truly seen only through them."

The noted women of the Renaissance seem to have fulfilled this function. Raphael's passion for *la Fornarina*§ evoked his masterpieces; and the list could be extended after Dante to Petrarch, Tasso, Leonardo da Vinci, etc. Very often the inspiration consisted, as it does now, not so much in the giving of ideas as in the stirring of the soul which awakes it to ideas.

Women were famous in other countries also, especially in France and Spain. Margaret of France,‖ the elder sister of Francis I, wielded power, and played a central rôle, through her station, as well as by her temperament and intellectual gifts. The *Heptameron*,

* J. A. Symonds describes it.

† For stories of the Lady of Monza, Lucrezia Buonvisi, the Cenci, the Massimi, Vittoria Accoramboni, the Duchess of Palliano, etc., see J. A. Symonds's *The Renaissance in Italy*.

‡ Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529), Italian author of the famous treatise, *Il cortegiano*, known as *Il libro d'oro*. He was a diplomatist as well as a man of letters.

§ Margarita Luzzi.

‖ Died in 1549.

a series of tales and poems which she wrote, gives a vivid picture of the life surrounding her, and is largely biographical. Her "ideal of life was humanly and religiously inclusive," * and one of her most worthy sayings was that "kings and princes are not masters and lords of the poor but only their ministers." This indicates the sense of responsibility that the greater learning and increased thought was bringing to women.†

Isabella of Castile is another notable figure, whose education and enterprise made her willing to aid Columbus when none would believe him. Together with the spirit of enquiry, the love of learning, and the tolerance of human nature, there existed in these women a devoutness‡ that was lacking three centuries later. To the Greek religion of beauty was added the Christian ideal of *caritas*, and, just as Michael Angelo's sculptures express spiritual stress in addition to the calm symmetry of the Greek, so the women of the Renaissance brought the warmth of life and the piety of the Church to the classic learning they imbibed.

The ethics of love during the period of the Renaissance is expounded by two contrasting parties: the novelists and comic poets look upon it as consisting of sensual enjoyments to be won by any means; the lyric poets and some other writers, regard it as a deep spiritual passion and a unity of souls.§ It was

* H. O. Taylor, in *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century*, which contains a chapter on "The Circle of Margaret of Navarre."

† A large part of *Women of the Renaissance* is taken up in discussing her opinions.

‡ In the case of Isabella this expressed itself in a terrible manner by the support she gave Torquemada in the Inquisition. With both these souls the motive was to save their victims for heaven in spite of themselves. The whole question of the psychological and ethical causes of the Inquisition needs further thought and insight.

§ See J. Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*.

thought that the two aspects could be genuine in the same individual, and this with no affectation. The marriage tie was held more lightly, and Ariosto,* for one, claimed for women a similar licence in love to that in men. Bembo† is an exponent of Platonic love, and so is Tullia d' Aragona,‡ of whom the representative of Mantua at the court of Ferrara wrote to Isabella d' Este—

> "I have to record the arrival amongst us of a gentle lady, so modest in behaviour, so fascinating in manners, that we cannot help considering her something divine; she sings *impromptu* all kinds of airs and motets; she keeps herself in touch with the events of the day, and we cannot suggest a subject with which she does not appear conversant."

The general awakening of thought on history, on life and its meaning, included thought of sex, and both men and women were more self-conscious of themselves as such. They were feeling their way to an attitude less dominated by Catholic teaching, and inevitably they made mistakes. In the present day we have more light to guide us, though it is yet insufficient; but four centuries ago the only light was cast by Christianity, the classical writers, and human fumblings, so that the exaggerations of chivalry and some poets were possible, and not blameworthy. Chivalry as formerly understood has passed; the "physical weakness" of women is less apparent, and of less importance, as modern life requires endurance as much as muscular strength. Protection is now afforded by each sex to the other, and especially

* Lodovico Ariosto, died 1533, chiefly noted as author of *Orlando Furioso*.

† Pietro Bembo, scholar and cardinal. He wrote several works, including one on Platonic love.

‡ She wrote *On the Infinity of Love*.

by the woman if she be a wife. But before it passed, chivalry performed its task.

The age of chivalry had prepared for the gradual decline of the ideal of virginity, and instead of praise of celibacy and retirement, the power of womanhood to refine and beautify the world was extolled. Such injunctions as the following indicate the changing point of view:

> "Be obedient to your mother, show her honour and reverence and take care to please her in everything you can, as is her due as much because it is God's commandment as that I know she merits it, and that you ought to do so if you wish to succeed."*

Learning was not always confined to the richer classes, and a knowledge of Latin was widely diffused. Jeanne la Tournette,† a village girl in Normandy, sang Tenebrae in church, and was as skilled in Latin as the priest. But such cases were likely to have been few, and the necessary hard work would prevent the poor, either men or women, from acquiring any skill in aught but what brought them their livelihood. The ministration of which Margaret of France speaks would not extend to teaching the elements of reading. Indeed oftentimes it was dangerous for a woman not in a high position to show learning or skill beyond the average, since the dread accusation of witchcraft might be brought against her. The light of the Renaissance did not penetrate into the dark recesses of ignorance and superstition that caused the torture and death of hundreds of women. One of the blackest pages in Christian annals, comparable only to the horrors of the Inquisition, is that which tells of the treatment

* Instructions of a Duke of Nemours to his sons.

† She was fourteen and lived at Auvilliers in 1500. See *Women of the Renaissance.*

meted out to those women who were suspected of being witches. Occasional witch trials had occurred in the Middle Ages, but they were not common until after the Bull issued by Pope Innocent III, giving authority to two Dominican inquisitors in Germany to root out witchcraft and sorcery, and calling on church and state to render them every assistance.* These men wrote the *Malleus Maleficarum* which is an account of witchcraft and all concerning it. Therein it was stated that sorcery, or criminal intercourse with the devil, was mainly the work of women, who were more easily duped and more revengeful than men ; that poor women rather than rich were addicted to witchcraft and the old rather than the young. How a witch trial was to be conducted, and the use of torture to extract confession, were also detailed, and the authors' experiences in various towns related.

> " No one can read the evidence adduced at a witch-trial, or the confessions of the accused, without seeing how every accident and every misfortune, and every case of sickness or death, which had occurred in the vicinage for years, was thus explained, and how the circle of suspicion widened so that every conviction brought new victims ; burnings multiplied, and the terrified community was ready to believe that a half or more of its members were slaves of Satan, and it would never be free from their malignant vengeance until they were all exterminated. For more than two centuries this craze was perpetually breaking out in one part of Europe after another,† carefully nursed and stimulated by popes and inquisitors like Innocent VIII, and Leo X, Sprenger and Institoris, Bernard of Como and Bishop Binsfield, and the amount of human misery thence arising is simply incomputable."‡

* The Bull was issued in 1484 to Henry Institoris and James Sprenger.

† The parts mainly affected were Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and Sweden. Italy, France and Spain were immune. Scotland had more convictions than England.

‡ See H. C. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, Vol. III.

The sixteenth century was the most active period, and the reformers, Luther and Calvin, with their followers, were even more fierce in their persecutions. Terrible records occur of the widespread accusations and punishments.* Count Ulrich von Helfenstein and his brother caused sixty-three witches to be tortured and burned in 1563, "in conformity with the existing law and evangelical piety," as he said when protesting against the release of an accused woman at Solnic in Bohemia. Acquittals were very infrequent: a bishop of Geneva is said to have burned five hundred witches in three months; the little town of Ravenspurg, boasted that forty-eight had been burned there in five years; and Michelet† states that the holy office had, during a century and a half, burned at least thirty thousand witches, who, Paramo said, could, had they been left unpunished, have brought the whole world to destruction. Whether the numbers mentioned are correct, is impossible to say, for exaggerations are continual in mediæval times; but certain it is that a witch-burning mania occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The unfortunate women who suffered were probably often of the feeble-minded class or even insane. Probably also, they, as well as "heretics" in many cases, were sometimes no more than people of one fixed idea who irritated those around them, and the Middle Ages took short measures with them. Karl Pearson‡ thinks that witches were the successors of the wise women held in such esteem by the Teutonic peoples, and this theory in all likelihood accounts for some.

* See Jannsen's *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages.*

† In *La Sorcière*, Liv. 2, Chapter III.

‡ In the *Ethic of Freethought.*

Whatever the numbers were, the persecutions did not proceed without protests from humane persons. Sermons were occasionally preached wherein the absurdity of such credulity was exposed;* some writers derided the supposed power of witches and endeavoured to turn the minds of their readers to a more reasonable view;† and the town council of Nuremberg said that they had "never had much opinion of this witch business for they had always found that it had no foundation." But those who denied belief in witchcraft were liable to be accused of alliance with witches, and therefore not many voices were raised against the horrors perpetrated.

Of these Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettsheim is the best known.‡ He was a friend of Erasmus and wrote a treatise in Latin on the pre-eminence of women over men.§ By Reason, Law, Authority, and the Sacred Scriptures he attempts to prove that women are superior to men. His arguments range over sacred and profane history, introduce most of the famous women then known, including such differing types as Eve, Aspasia, Mary, Cassandra, and Hildegarde. The work is ingenious, and the reasons for certain facts are uncommon. An instance may be quoted—

> "The man knowingly sinned, the woman ignorantly, and erred being deceived. . . . Hence because mankind is condemned for the sin of the man, not the sin of the woman,

* Notably an Easter Sermon by Beerman, a Lutheran pastor.

† Andrew Schoppus, the Lutheran pastor at Wernigerode.

‡ 1486–1535. He once saved the life of a woman whose mother had been burnt as a witch. Through this he lost his post as Town Advocate and Orator at Metz. See Morley's *Life of Cornelius Agrippa.*

§ *De Nobilitate et Praecellentia Feminei Sexus.* English translations, under the titles of *The Glory of Women* and *Female Pre-eminence,* were published in the seventeenth century.

God willed that by the sex which brought sin, in the same sex should expiation be made. And this is why the order of the priesthood is committed to the man rather than to the woman, because every priest represented Christ, and Christ is of the sex of the first sinner, Adam. (Had sin come by the woman then it might well be that Christ would have come in the form of a woman and the priesthood been rather for women.) . . ."

Not for its arguments is the book of value, but as an indication of the fact that, in spite of one section of the community and of Christianity despising and torturing women, another section honoured and appreciated them. Perusal of the witch trials and consideration of the alleged great numbers who suffered by them is apt to lead to the idea that the atmosphere of the time was anti-feminist, but neither a religion nor a nation can be judged by the action of a few who held temporary power, or by the superstitious or the ignorant, without also considering the action and opinion of the remainder. Cornelius Agrippa could not have been solitary in his opinions.

The Reformation was long heralded before the appearance of Luther, and the "Morning Star of the Reformation"* had, in England, obtained a company of followers that prepared the way for changes. Lollardry† lived and worked its way throughout two centuries before the state-ordained Reformation, and it is of interest to note that one Lollard sect ordained women,‡ which proves to us they also shared in the reform of their faith. A similar spirit is shown among the Albigenses,§ a heretical

* Wyclif.

† An exhaustive account appears in *Lollardry and the Reformation in England*, by James Gairdner.

‡ *Journal of Education*, June, 1909.

§ So called from the district of Albi in the South of France, where they were numerous.

sect flourishing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and much persecuted by Pope Innocent III and others. Here the opinions spread to a great extent through the apostleship of women.* With them are often confused the Waldenses, followers of Peter Waldo,† who were excommunicated and persecuted, and of whom Milton wrote his sonnet commencing—

> " Avenge, O Lord ! thy slaughtered Saints whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;
> Even them that kept thy truth so pure of old.
> When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
> Forget not : In thy book record their groans
> Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
> Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
> Mother with infant down the rocks. . . ."

At the present time, the Waldenses possess the same religious and political rights as Roman Catholics in Italy, and the struggle for their existence and for their rights has throughout been helped by women, who preached their faith and suffered persecution in company with men.‡

Protestantism exerted a twofold influence on women : in removing from her the detailed guidance and dominance of the priesthood it gave her opportunity for more independence of thought and action ; but in accentuating the text of the Bible above tradition and the development of institutions, it tended to establish Old Testament ideas anent her position, and to treat what had grown by means of human effort with scant reverence. Woman is, on the whole, more conservatively minded than man,§ and whatever

* *The Women of the Renaissance*, by R. de M. la Claviere.

† A citizen of Lyons living in the latter half of the twelfth century,

‡ See H. C. Lea's *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*. Vol. II.

§ See *Man and Woman*, by Havelock Ellis.

destroys, appeals to her less than that which constructs. To the former class belongs Protestantism, as its very name attests; its watchword might be liberty, as loyalty might be that of Catholicism, though these terms are to be regarded neither as mutually exclusive, nor as comprehensive.* The mistake made by the Reformers was that they did not reform systems but demolished them. Monasticism perhaps suffered most; and in this sphere, women suffered more than men, for the suppression of convents deprived women of any outlet for their activities beyond homemaking. Asceticism had perverted some of the springs of energy that fed the streams of conventual life, and without reform the system was doomed. But instead of regeneration from within, came demolition from without. It is true that attempts at reform were made at famous convents—the rule of Mere Angelique† at Port Royal is a noted instance, both of what could be accomplished by an abbess possessing common sense and of the difficulties which surrounded any such attempts. She discerned that asceticism in itself was useless, and directed the activities of her nuns to charities, with the consequence that Port Royal was a comfort to many, especially in war time. From the history of monasticism can be culled other lesser instances which were disregarded by those who saw in the past nothing but mistakes.

Women obtained but little encouragement from the great reformers to enter any larger spheres than

* For an excellent comparison between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in their effect on national characteristics, see Lecky's *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, Chapter V.

† Lived at beginning of seventeenth century. She was appointed abbess in 1599 at the age of seven. An account of her life and work, drawn from her own writings and those of her nuns, is given in *The Nuns of Port Royal*, by M. E. Lowndes.

those of wifehood and motherhood. Even the heroic Bruno with his poetic philosophy and imagination said: "I allow woman to learn; to teach, never." And the scholarly Erasmus with his balanced temperament quoted approvingly the text that Christ is head of the man, and man of the woman, adding: "'Tis against nature for a woman to have rule over males." Luther, the fearless and robust monk, could brook no woman away from her home, and was even willing to permit polygamy:

> "It is impossible for me to condemn a man for having more than one wife at one time, seeing that the Holy Scriptures do not forbid it."

This was depending on the written word of bygone centuries, without allowing for any growth in human ideas or morals. He considered that women were mistresses and queens in the home* and their talk should be of household affairs.

> "But take them from their housewifery and they are good for nothing. . . . Woman is born to manage a household, 'tis her lot, her law of nature: man is born for law and polity, to administer and govern states."

Education for women he discouraged: "No gown worse becomes a woman than the desire to be wise," and in more brutal vein he said, "If a woman becomes weary or at last dead from bearing that matters not, let her only die from bearing, she is there to do it." But such remarks do not express his opinion of women fully. To a woman he owed care and succour when he was a poor student, and thinking of Ursula Cotta, he wrote "There is nothing on earth more beautiful than a woman's heart in which piety has taken up its

* Essentially a Jewish ideal.

abode." And of his wife, Katherine von Bora, he says, "I would not exchange my poverty with her for all the riches of Croesus without her," and also, "I love my Kethe more than I do myself for I would die rather than harm should happen to her or her children."

John Knox vented his anger against women who ruled* and attempted to prove from classical writers, Roman law, the Bible, and the Christian fathers, that women were unfitted for governing. He says† in his vigorous way—

> "By the order of Nature, by the malediction and curse pronounced against women by the mouth of St. Paul, the interpreter of God's sentence; by the example of that commonwealth in which God by his word planted order and policy; and finally by the most godly writers, God hath dejected woman from rule, dominion, empire, and authority above man. . . . Moreover seeing that neither the example of Deborah, neither the law made for the daughters of Zelophehad, neither yet the foolish consent of an ignorant multitude, be able to justify that which God so plainly hath condemned, let all men take heed what quarrel and cause from henceforth they defend. If God raise up any noble heart to vindicate the liberty of his country, and to suppress the monstrous empire of women, let all such as shall presume to defend them on the same, most certainly know that in so doing, they lift their hand against God, and that one day they shall find his power fighting against their foolishness."

Henry VIII ordered that no woman was to read the Bible which was chained in every church unless a man were by to explain it to her,‡ an act indicative of his general attitude towards women. But in spite of such hindrances and opinions, women fulfilled their share in the work of the Reformation. Anne Askew insisted on expounding the Bible openly and

* Elizabeth in England, Mary in Scotland, Catherine di Medici in France.

† In *The Monstrous Regimen of Women.*

‡ Selden's *Table Talk.*

was a martyr for her beliefs.* The women victims in Mary's reign suffered as courageously as did the men, and helped to light the candle of which Latimer spoke; while the tragic figure of Mary herself shows woman clinging loyally to old forms, though failing to preserve them. When, before becoming queen, she was summoned before the Council of Edward VI, for continuing to hear Mass, she answered that "her soul was God's and her faith she would not change, nor dissemble her opinion with contrary doings."†

Yet another type appears in Margaret Roper, who comforted the last days of her father, Sir Thomas More, and who is worthy to stand by the side of the other great women of the Renaissance for her learning and courage. And no lack is there of similar characters; high-souled women endowed with intellect, and changing, either directly or indirectly, the course of events. Anne Bacon, the mother of Francis Bacon; Mildred Burleigh, the wife of Elizabeth's minister, Lady Rachel Russell, who vainly exerted all the pressure possible in order to save her husband from the injustice of his sentence; all these are names that recall deeds of Christian women whose religion was real to them.

On the Continent, during the stormy times of the early Reformation, the story of Sibylla of Cleves‡ and her husband, the Elector of Saxony, is one of brave resistance to the Emperor on account of her faith.§ In later years, a notable figure was Jeanne

* She was tortured and burnt as a heretic in Henry VIII's reign.

† From the Journal of Edward VI for March, 1550, given in *Leading Documents of English History*, by G. C. Lee.

‡ Elder sister of Anne of Cleves.

§ For an account of her life and that of other women, mostly of high rank, of her time, see *Notable Women of the Reformation*, by W. Chapman, which, though one-sided in view, gives reliable information.

d' Albret, Queen of Navarre, daughter of Margaret of France and mother of Henry of Navarre (who became Henry IV of France), she was the teacher and inspirer of the young Huguenot leader, and from her he inherited his intellect, his nobility of character, and his Protestant belief. Previous to the Huguenot massacre in France, many French heretics had been imprisoned and burnt in several districts, and women were not spared.* Of the Huguenots who escaped to England and settled in the country many were women and they introduced methods of lace-making, weaving, etc., and formed an industrious and intelligent section of the community.

On the question of marriage Protestantism wrought some changes. It declined to regard the act as either a sacrament or a concession to human weakness, but it considered the married state as the most desirable one for mankind. That opinion in itself would tend to raise womanhood; and the abolition of celibacy for the clergy would banish the implication that the state of marriage was inferior to that of a single life. On the other hand the Old Testament theory that made the husband the absolute head was revived, and it may account for the promise to obey exacted from the wife in the marriage service of the English Church. Unequal vows are found only in the rites of Britain and part of Germany, and those not till late in mediæval times. The compilers of the English prayer book in Edward VI's reign adopted the Sarum model, but in the Orthodox Eastern Church, and in the majority of Western rites, both ancient and modern, including the present Roman ceremony, the same question is

* In *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve*, by Henry White, there occurs a sketch of the early religious persecution in France.

put to the man and woman, and she gives the same marriage vow. Subordination of the wife is most strongly expressed in the service books of the Dutch Calvinists.

The tendency to treat marriage more as a civil contract raised the possibility of divorce, and to allow it at all was a point gained towards greater freedom. And divorce having once become possible, there were introduced further problems, such as the questions regarding sufficiency of cause for divorce, the maintenance of the wife, and the disposal of the children, all of which are difficulties remaining to be solved by the twentieth century, though first brought to practical issues by the division in Christianity.

With the more human view of marriage there went also very vigorous treatment of sexual irregularity of any kind, and greater intolerance was felt for all "sins of the flesh." The same difference of view can still be detected by comparing the attitude shown towards irregular unions by the Northern Protestant nations, and the Southern Catholic ones. Catholicism, while condemning, yet extended an understanding and pardon that the more inflexible Protestantism often refused.

Non-appreciation of the past, which was one characteristic of early Protestantism, subtly militated against women's instincts, and the loss of reverence for traditions and institutions had the same effect, so that womanhood, if not individual women, was relegated to a less prominent position in the scheme of life outlined by Protestants. Their insistence on reason and depreciation of feeling was also the manifestation of a masculine rather than feminine attitude, and tended to reduce the influence of woman's

inclinations and intuitions. Thus the general effect of the Reformation on women was a complex one; in some ways, such as the dissolution of the monastic system, it deprived them of a sphere of work; in others, such as the point of view taken with regard to marriage, it elevated their sex; and yet in other more subtle ways, such as the instances given of belitting the past and over-exaggerating the value of reason, it closed invisible avenues of influence. Only woman herself, reacting on the circumstances, could decide what the changed religion was able to do for her, and how she in her turn could modify it. But in this reaction woman was deprived of the auspices of the mediæval goddess whom Protestantism had dethroned. For with the lowering of dignity suffered by the Divine Mary came a correspondingly altered attitude towards her sex, unconscious it probably was, yet inevitable. Henceforth Christianity flowed in two streams, wide apart at first, but gradually nearing as the centuries passed, with the result that at the present day similarities are regarded rather than differences.* In both streams women kept their way, whether by carrying on the traditions and extending the activities of Catholicism, or by breaking away from worn out forms and following new channels of thought and work.

However, the methods by which women worked or expressed themselves were changed. What is, perhaps, one of the noblest communities ever founded was inspired by Vincent de Paul† who embodied his idea in his Company of Sisters of Charity. His own

* Notice such meetings as the Conference of Religious Thinkers, which held its fourth annual conference at Caxton Hall in June, 1923.

† He died in 1660. For his work and life see *Vincent de Paul*, by E. K. Sanders.

description of the society indicates its scope and aims:

> "A community who have no monastery but the houses of the sick, who have for cells only a lodging or the poorest room, whose chapel is the Parish Church, who have the streets for cloisters. They are enclosed only by obedience, they make the fear of God their *grille*, and they have no veil but their own modesty. . . . There is this difference between the Sister of Charity and a Religious, that while for the Religious the one aim is the attainment of Perfection for herself, the object of the Sister of Charity is the comfort and salvation of her neighbour."

The members of the community were women of the working class (many of them could not read), but their duties, combining those of the modern parish nurse and mission woman, were fulfilled in a manner superior to that of the Ladies of Charity, who were established later. Vincent de Paul always considered the lower middle class the most useful. During war, the Sisters organised relief for famine and plague, and served in military hospitals. Even with no possibility of reward for its service the vitality of the Community extended, so that the Sisters of Charity became known throughout Paris. A teacher and organiser in the person of Madame Le Gras had been appointed; her devotion stood the test of years, and was actuated by love towards her Church and religion, and by her admiration for the founder of the Community. Through her suggestion Conferences of the Sisters were held at which Vincent de Paul spoke, advised, and issued instructions. Companionship of work undertaken by a man and woman, exemplified by the example just quoted, is common throughout the history of Christianity, and such work accomplishes more and extends farther than that undertaken by

one sex alone. Similar to Madame Le Gras is Madame de Chantal, grandmother of the gifted Madame de Sévigné, and friend of Francis de Sales; she founded at his suggestion a community for charity; and searchers through the annals of the Army of Succour can find other common work undertaken by the two sexes with mutual help and interest. The nearest Protestant counterpart to the Sisterhood of Vincent de Paul is the institution at Kaiserwerth, where Florence Nightingale was trained, and where are established a home for the infirm, hospitals and asylums, an orphanage for girls, and a refuge for convicts, as well as training institutes of various kinds. Much of the extensive help given to the poor for their amelioration, rather than for the abolition of poverty, has originated in Church activities. Throughout this sphere women have provided the major exertions, if not by initiating methods of relief, at least by carrying out what was proposed. Not connected with Christianity, but germane to the idea of sisterhood, and formed by the twentieth century sisters of the women who served their neighbours, are the many Women's Clubs established in the United States, the members of which interest themselves in civic duties and social work.

If *construction* of ideals, traditions, and avenues of activity, was the main contribution of Catholicism, the *preparation* of the site of the human soul for a more spacious edifice of religion, opening out to all parts of the universe, welcoming within its portals all races of the world, and having room for freedom of movement, has been the supreme task of Protestantism, which was not a new religion, but an unconscious herald announcing the advent of the

final comprehensive faith,* and first releasing the mind from fetters. To this message of deliverance the various aspects of Nonconformity contributed their share, also without realising whither they tended. Here women underwent the preliminary hardships necessary in all reforms, and spread their convictions with enthusiasm.

Jenny Geddes is honoured in Scotland for her vigorous protest in St. Giles Church, Edinburgh, at the introduction of Episcopacy, a protest that was followed by the establishment and signing of the National Covenant.† And the monument near Wigtown, dedicated to two Margarets, the young Margaret Wilson and the elder Margaret McLauchlan, keeps green the memory of their martyrdom during the persecution of the Covenanters, when they were tied to stakes at low tide and drowned for refusing to give up their faith.‡ The annals of Nonconformity has many such in its pages. A noble story is that of Elizabeth Bunyan,§ the simple peasant woman, whose courage and fidelity served her husband during the persecution which he suffered for over twelve years. And the women characters in *The Pilgrim's Progress* are but portraits of English women living at Bedford in the seventeenth century: Charity in the House Beautiful, who advised the pilgrim to gain the confidence of his children, is an average sensible and kind Englishwoman; the young girl Mercy,

* "Faith in Human Nature," and all that that phrase implies, is one way of naming it.

† In 1639, after Archbishop Laud's order for the Prayer Book to be used in all Scottish churches.

‡ On May 11th, 1685. Millais has made the younger woman the subject of one of his pictures.

§ John Bunyan was twice married; through the influence of his first wife he was converted. Elizabeth was the second, and she mothered his five children during her attempts to obtain his release.

accompanying and helping Christiana, depicts the serious maid of the time; Christian's wife herself is a product of Puritanism, who "called her children together" and led them. Just as the events in *Vanity Fair* are pictures of the scandalous trials in Bunyan's day, so are the women in his book the same as those he encountered in his own pilgrimage. Mrs. Timorous and Madame Bubble indicate other types, undecided or frivolous, and each unhelpful. Bunyan's characters are all human, and, if their sentiments are not now timely, they were sincere in the seventeenth century.

The notorious Judge Jeffreys was responsible for the death of a Baptist woman who had anticipated the work of Elizabeth Fry by devoting herself to the visitation of criminals in prison; she had sheltered a fugitive after the Duke of Monmouth's rising,* who, in order to save his own life, had betrayed her. Like the more well-known Alice Lisle, she was sentenced to be burned, and in her case the sentence was carried out without commutation to beheading. That these two women were Nonconformists militated against them in Jeffreys' eyes, which saw nothing but "lying knaves" in "those snivelling canting Presbyterians."†

A woman was the real originator of the Wesleyan movement, and the mother of John and Charles Wesley has often been called the Mother of Methodism; her insistence on method in daily life and its duties was the beginning of the religious habits of her son and his followers. She herself, married to a Church of England clergyman, inaugurated meetings for the parishioners in the vicarage, and held her way when

* Quelled by the rout at Sedgemoor in 1685.

† His own words during the Bloody Assizes, after which he was appointed Lord Chancellor.

her husband and his curate remonstrated. Not only did her two most distinguished children learn order in life from her, but they inherited also her sane common sense, her power of organisation, her preference for simplicity, and her strong will. Almost contemporary with Mrs. Wesley there worked the Countess of Huntingdon, of whom Newman said that she was "a person simply and unconditionally giving up this world for the next," and into her sphere of society she attempted to bring some sincerity of life and realisation of common humanity.

Among the Primitive Methodists one of the most attractive movements is that initiated by Mary Thorne by the spontaneous declaration of her conversion at the close of a service in Shebbear Church, Devonshire.* She and her husband were founders of the Bible Christian denomination, a conspicuous feature of which was the great number of women evangelists who worked in it with devotion and courage.

> "The most adventurous and intrepid missionaries of the good cause were women. To the Scilly Isles, to the Channel Islands, to the Isle of Wight, to London, and even to far Northumberland, women evangelists carried the message and were singularly successful in most instances in securing a foothold for the Connexion. Some of their experiences were romantic and thrilling. They were almost penniless, throwing themselves upon the generosity of the people; they endured fatigues and faced perils from which men might have shrunk. No hardship of the journey daunted them if the choice lay between obedience and disobedience to the heavenly visions. Through weakness, sickness, and exhaustion they persevered often with a courage at which we, in our unheroic days, can only marvel, and with a devotion that puts our modern lukewarms to shame.

* An account of Mary Thorne and her husband, with the widespread effects of their evangelising campaign, is given in *The History of the Free Churches*, by C. Silvester Horne.

Perhaps their truest successors have been found among the most consecrated of the ' lasses ' of the Salvation Army."*

The prototype of Dinah Morris was a woman of this kind; and their number was in all likelihood greater than the absence of particular names would seem to indicate. Hannah More,† though not so evangelical as the Wesleyans, was probably influenced by the revival passing over England, and her establishment of schools in the mining region of the Mendips is a parallel action to the care extended by the Methodists to the neglected villagers and poorer classes.

The band of Quaker women form a noble company, who suffered intensely for their faith together with their men-companions, and who have always possessed the equal privilege of speaking at meetings—the Inner Light knows no distinction of sex. One of the first women sufferers under the persecution of the Friends was Elizabeth Stirredge‡ who was imprisoned more than once; but the "Boston martyrs,"§ men and women who were scourged through various towns for expressing their religious opinions, are the most well known, together with Mary Fisher, who is reported to have visited and been courteously received by the Sultan, Mohammed IV.‖ Certain Baptist churches in Holland are thought to have originated the practice of women preaching. George Fox noticed that "many more of their women do venture to preach among the Baptists than among the Brownists in

* *History of the Free Churches.*

† 1745–1833.

‡ Her life is sketched in *Annals of the Early Friends*, by Frances A. Budge.

§ Bowden's *History of the Society of Friends in America.*

‖ For a comprehensive view of Quaker women see Mrs. Brailsford's *Quaker Women.*

England."* George Fox himself always upheld the liberty of women in both the ministry and church government, and in the present day it is usual to have joint meetings of men and women to settle church affairs. Sincerity and a quiet glow of enthusiasm mark the early Quaker women, such as Elizabeth Horton, who accompanied Fox to the Barbados and Jamaica, where she died, and Margaret Tell, "the mother of Quakerism." These characteristics are present in their followers to-day, and give evidence that the Quaker's religion is one specially real; and when such is the case women are more prominent than in an aspect of religion more professional. That the Quakers who were punished drove their convictions to an issue too logical, and that they regarded the importance of their own witnessing in undue proportion, is probable, and the same has been seen in some present day movements. A want of perspective is often exhibited by reformers, who fail to take the whole field into account, or to see life steadily and to *see it whole.* However, through the efforts of women, in as great a part as men, Quakerism has flourished and preserved its purity and reality. From the commencement the principle of the equality of the sexes has been followed. In the marriage service of the Society of Friends the man and woman make their declaration in identical terms, with a mutual promise of love and faithfulness; breach of promise cases and divorce are almost unknown among them. A thorough education for girls as well as boys has always been considered necessary, and it is worthy of notice that a large proportion of the women serving on Councils, Boards of Guardians, and Education

* Written in 1646.

Committees are Quakers. Women sharing equally with men in such offices as overseers and elders, and in the vocal ministry at Friends' Meetings, has tended to produce among the women themselves " a wonderfully deep sense of responsibility and of self-respect, of noble and dignified womanhood."* No other body has evinced this principle of equality between the sexes to the same extent for so long a period.

Similar to the Quakers in their experience of the Inner Light were the Quietests, who spoke of the Interior Way, with Mme. Guyon† as one of their most revered members and leaders. Her influence in France was felt throughout the land, and her opinions and writings caused her to be persecuted as a " heretic " and twice imprisoned. However, Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the virtual leader of the French Church, could discover nothing heretical about her beliefs, and in reality she belonged to no church or sect, although externally she remained a member of the Roman Church and conformed to its rites. Francis de la Combe, who ended his life in the Bastille for preaching heresy, was a disciple of hers, and her friendship with Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, was one which much affected his opinions‡ and stimulated his thought. Before he met her he had written a treatise on the Education of Girls which was far in advance of all contemporary reformers. Realising that " nothing is more neglected than the education of girls," Fénelon advocates a training with " Reason as the master and

* Elizabeth Fox Howard, in a pamphlet entitled *Women in the Church and in Life*, which gives a concise account of women among the Quakers.

† 1648–1717.

‡ Viscount St. Cyres, in his *François de Fénelon*, calls her the Archbishop's evil genius, but he is throughout prejudiced against Mme. Guyon.

Feeling as the mistress," by which girls would be enabled to carry out their duties and use their rights. The book was widely read and exerted much influence.

Many instances of modern mysticism can be gathered from biographies of Christian women whose experiences have been recorded, and, in the majority of cases, they are more self-conscious than those of the Middle Ages. One of the tasks of psychology is the elucidation of such experiences, and perhaps their explanation.* Women, as being more passive and receptive in mind than men, seem to afford the more fertile ground in the investigation.

Another phase of Christianity wherein women are to the fore is the work of the Salvation Army, one of the most successful religious denominations, with its branches in fifty-eight different countries, ramifying into the lowest quarters, and, in a limited way, bringing light there. The whole scheme of the Salvation Army was worked out with the help of " General " Booth's wife, who has been called " one of the noblest spiritual forces of her age."† Though narrower in many ways than their founder, yet most earnest and devoted, the Salvation Army women at least realise to some extent that physical conditions are the basis of life and religion, and must be taken into consideration. All remedial agencies that minister to the body first, and give spiritual help afterwards, unconsciously acknowledge this fact, which the mystics are apt to overlook. This omission is, however, more a sign of the New Thought and Higher Thought sects flourishing chiefly in America, than of Christianity in general.

An instance of a side issue of Christianity is the

* Some accounts are given in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James.

† By C. Silvester Horne.

Russian sect of the Doukhobórs, numbers of whom have migrated to Canada in order to escape conscription. They are mainly held together in that land by the influence of their women, who are the chief repositories of the " Living Book " or traditions of the sect, and who wish their people to remain a community and not to spread abroad among the lonely Canadian farms. Of the six leaders in their history, one, L. V. Kalmikóva, has been a woman. They believe that marriage should be accomplished without any ceremonies, and that it needs only " the will of those who are come of age, and who are united in love to one another, the consent of the parents, and an inward oath and vow before all-seeing God, in the souls of those who are marrying, that they will to the end of their days remain faithful and inseparable."*

It may be simpler to indicate the tendencies of the nineteenth century womanhood in Christianity by the mention of a few types of women and their work which influenced that time. From the middle of the nineteenth century it may be said that other forces beyond that of Christianity have moulded thought and action, as well as feeling, to a greater extent than the religion. Scientific knowledge, geological, biological and chemical, has unrolled its pages, " rich with the spoils of time," to the mind, and has evoked wonder and interest ; inquiry into social conditions and the basis of society has opened up avenues along which energy and devotion may be expended ; philosophical discussion attempting to probe all life's secrets has lifted speculation from the comparatively barren fields of the Written Word, and has commenced to embrace all life's activities and

* An account of them can be found in *A Peculiar People*, by Aylmer Maude.

manifestations in its sweep. Whether consciously to the percipient or not, such elements as these enter into the conclusion of all who live in their atmosphere. "Humanity learns in spite of itself. Whether it turn aside or welcome a thinker, a reformer, an invention, or a custom, it is inevitably influenced by each. This is partly because humanity, maybe unconsciously, is, in a sense prepared for and in part recognises what comes; since the great ones of the earth are as much a product of their times as moulders of them; they but gather together and weave into another garment of Truth the single threads that others have spun, a garment being a very different thing from a number of threads."*

Therefore even the names following are those of women who received their impulse to service from sources wider and beyond those of the Church, or the Bible, the only criteria of the earlier ages of Christianity. And in so far as the women limited themselves to their religion for a guide, they lost breadth and tolerance; their personal devotion and gentle-mindedness was derived thence and, to their own consciousness, so was their eagerness to serve. This is illustrated to a remarkable degree in the efforts of missionary women who left their land with desire to spread the gospel, and laboured to provide physical improvements in the "heathen"; women of China were persuaded to unbind their feet; the negresses of Nyasa were given material for clothing; the Esquimaux were provided with medicine and food. A love for their Lord was subtly mingled with compassion for their human brethren; the former feeling,

* Quoted from an article by the author, on "Bergson and Education," which appeared in *The Journal of Education* for December, 1913.

when dwelling in a narrow heart, created misconceptions that caused a good lady to write that a city in India was wholly given over to idolatry,* and another to depict the Chinese as utterly degraded; the latter feeling providing, with wonderful self-sacrifice, for the needs of those more backward in civilisation. The result has been that much human effort has gone astray, and has exerted itself in directions yielding but little, while what was regarded as a side issue proved fruitful and lasting. Only during the present century has there begun a general understanding of the ideals and achievements of Eastern nations, because only then have they been regarded by eyes unspectacled with the idea that all but the Christian religion is false. On the other hand, missionary motives were sincere, especially in early days; the hardships and willing devotion were unquestioned; and success, in some directions unexpected and unintended, was not lacking. If they were not the interpreters of native races, missionaries proved to be, in a very real sense, the pioneers of civilisation.† The names of David Livingstone and his wife are not those of mere missionaries, for the abolition of the slave trade in Nyasa, and the development of Northern Rhodesia are outcomes of Livingstone's travels, and Mary Moffat‡ who became his wife, was, in his own words, his "guardian angel," and "a great blessing," Familiar with missionary life and the daughter of an eminent missionary, she lightened the earnestness of those about her with a winning manner, a playful

* *Life of Mary Carpenter*, by J. Estlin Carpenter.

† For an account, written from an unbiased standpoint, of missionary work in general, see *The English People Overseas : South Africa*, by A. Wyatt Tilby.

‡ A sketch of her life is given and some of her letters are quoted in *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*, by W. G. Blaikie.

spirit, and a helping hand. Lord Shaftesbury said of her* that—

> "She had surrendered her best feelings, and sacrificed her own private interests to the advancement of civilisation and the great interests of Christianity."

The two daughters of Bishop Colenso did their utmost to improve the treatment meted to the natives in Natal. Frances wrote *The Ruin of Zululand*, telling the tale of what she conceived to be a national wrongdoing, and shared her father's toil for the welfare of thousands who were in need. Harriette, the elder, showed great perseverance in her task of obtaining justice for the weak and helpless, and in resisting the progress of wrongful administration by high officials to native tribes.†

Anna Stach, who went to Greenland in the eighteenth century and married a missionary there, laboured in that field herself, and every generation of her family since has provided one or more missionaries; a relative, Matthew Stach, was the founder of the Moravian Mission in that district. The China Inland Mission, which is inter-denominational, has two-thirds of its membership made up by women. Some hundreds‡ of women missionaries are sent out to India, Ceylon, and South Africa by the Salvation Army. The first girls' school in Calcutta was opened by a woman missionary,§ and the Zenana Mission brought some of the outside world into Hindu women's homes; the medical work in Northern India, started by two

* At a meeting held in Livingstone's honour at Freemasons Hall, London, on December 16th, 1856.

† A few facts about the daughters can be gleaned from *The Life of Bishop Colenso*, by G. W. Cox.

‡ Men and women together number about 700.

§ In 1822, by Miss Cooke.

American women* was also an offspring of missionary activity.† A few words must be inserted anent Mary Slessor of Calabar, the Scottish factory girl, who worked in Nigeria‡ in energetic and unconventional ways. She thought the native women were the greatest problem in the mission field, and did "not wonder the men were what they were." If the men were to be reached she thought more must be done for the women.

Similar to the women who went forth to sow the seeds of their religion were others who might be termed Women of the Empire, in that they travelled beyond the bounds of their own land. Such was Mary Carpenter,§ of the Unitarian faith, whose advocacy of education in India and prison reform in Canada was an outgrowth of her work in the foundation of Reformatory and Industrial schools in England. Another woman, an earnest Catholic, laboured for the welfare of poor emigrants when they reached Australia. Mrs. Chisholm's‖ efforts resulted in a better treatment after the facts she had collected were placed before a committee of the House of Lords.

The first and only European Training College for Women Teachers in South Africa was established by Mother Cecile who had gone out in 1883 at the call of Bishop Webb of Grahamstown. Under her invigorating influence the students' later work permeated the colony with some of her spirit, and they themselves

* Miss Swain and Miss Seelye.

† These facts are culled from Warneck's *History of Protestant Missions*, and others may be found in the Records of Missionary Societies.

‡ See *Mary Slessor of Calabar*, by W. P. Livingstone.

§ 1807–1877.

‖ Died in 1877. An account of her life appears in *Brave Citizens*, by F. J. Gould.

were always recognised as coming from St. Peter's. "Don't let the sparkle go out of the Community," she said, on going away for the last time. Her previous work had included the care of an orphanage and an industrial school, and during her stay of over twenty years in South Africa she won the confidence of the British, Dutch, and natives.*

Two other Christian teachers whose work greatly forwarded the education of women were Mary Buss,† of the North London Collegiate School, and Dorothea Beale,‡ of Cheltenham College. Each of them had been educated at Queen's College§ when it was the only women's college, and each carried its high ideals and enthusiasm into her own school. Thousands of girls have grown under their influence and can testify to its effect.

The Lady Chapel in Liverpool Cathedral recalls many a great name connected with Christianity, and a visit to the stained glass windows commemorating women of all ages will give a vista of the genius of Christian womanhood, ranking from Kitty Wilkinson (Catherine of Liverpool) who helped the needy in many ways and was the originator of baths and washhouses for the poor, to Dr. Alice Marval, the untiring worker in the native women's hospital at Cawnpore while the plague was raging. During the last month of her life she also paid two hundred and forty-six visits to patients in the city, but, weakened by the strain, she herself succumbed to the

* A sympathetic sketch of her life is given in a booklet by Margaret Robins, and also in the *Notes on the Windows in the Lady Chapel of Liverpool Cathedral*, published by the Cathedral Committee. She died in 1905.

† 1827–1894.

‡ 1831–1906.

§ Founded in 1847.

disease.* The entire conception and execution of the chapel symbolises the honour paid by the Church of England to good and brave women within its sphere.† Not only are individuals appreciated, but also all those like unto them; the window to Mother Cecile is also dedicated to "all women loving and large-hearted in counsel"; that to Kitty Wilkinson, to "all poor helpers of the poor," and Dr. Alice Marval stands for "all who have laid down their lives for their sisters." In paying homage to the one known, we render like praise to the many "who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."

From the great army of nurses the names of Florence Nightingale, Sister Dora of Walsall, and Nurse Cavell stand out, but they are symbols to which thanks and respect are given that are also due to the mass whose names are not carried beyond a hospital ward or poor district. It is not to be supposed that only those whose names live in history were worthy of praise or capable of heroism; history may be the biography of great men, but the biographies are *recorded* in only a few cases. There was more than one woman capable of Florence Nightingale's work, but to her alone the call came, and nobly she responded. Her greatness consisted not in the mildness and gentleness that usually figure prominently in sketches of her life; she was a woman of decided character and strong will‡—only by such qualities could she have accomplished her work. More than one nurse, also, could be found in the annals of hospitals

* January 5th, 1904.

† Such women as Harriet Martineau and George Eliot are not included, although they were greatly influenced by Christianity in their youth.

‡ See *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, by Sir Edward Cook.

in England and on the Continent, with a record of life devotion such as Sister Dora's of Walsall.* Her religion, about which she was deeply and sincerely in earnest, did not make her narrow or joyless, and her humorous remarks brightened many a sufferer's hours, while her interest in the patients after they had left brought her a great circle of grateful friends,† and left a fair mark on her town.

Anglican Sisterhoods‡ have given scope to many women who found in religion their peace, and in social work their salvation, With quietness they follow out their devotions and duties, and live secluded lives that yet help their fellows.

Other types, combining the missionary spirit with social work, are the members of the Biblewomen and Nurses Mission. Starting with the distribution of Bibles the way was naturally opened for help in improving homes and establishing Mother's Meetings, Savings Clubs, Hostels, Seaside Houses, and the various other activities that have grown from the simple beginning made by Mrs. Ranyard and her assistant, Marian.§ Similarly to the experience of St. Vincent de Paul, it was found that women from the class to which succour was brought were the most useful and sensible. In their ministrations was no aloofness or air of patronage, while their sympathies were real and their understanding thorough. The essentials required in the Biblewomen were said to be piety, courage, common sense, humility, docility, an observant eye, and cheerfulness—most of them

* Dorothy Wyndlow Pattison, 1832–1878.

† See *Sister Dora*, by Margaret Lonsdale.

‡ Founded by Dr. Pusey in 1844; he was assisted by laymen, of whom Gladstone was one.

§ A history of the Biblewomen, etc., is given in *Light Amid London Shadows*, by Rose E. Selfe.

are qualities that their environment would have fostered if the germs existed.

Of other social workers it will be sufficient to mention Sarah Martin,* the poor dressmaker, who reformed Yarmouth Prison and spent her days in providing work for the prisoners, teaching them, and conducting services on Sundays. Elizabeth Fry, a Quaker, extended her work through a wider field, and was honoured for it; Sarah Martin† remained obscure. But their work cannot be overrated, for they saw the good in things evil, and drew it forth. One of the greatest among the nineteenth century women was Josephine Butler,‡ and her work is yet unfinished. She boldly faced calumny and danger in order to protect a class seldom considered except with aversion, and after years of labour she effected her aim. But even she did not comprehend the complexity of the problem of prostitution—that remains as the task of the twentieth century woman-soul, and a most difficult one it is Unless a farther stage than mere censure of the men and abhorrence of the women is reached, solution is impossible. The economic factor, reacting on the occupation and wages of women, on the age at which men can marry, and on the useless lives spent by many of the so-called "independent," must be taken fully into account, as well as the army system of barracks, and the lack of sex instruction to the youth of both sexes, before a comprehension of the question is obtained. All the forces at her disposal and all her understanding sympathy must

* An account of her life and work appears in *Women of Christianity*, by Julia Kavanagh.

† Among an interesting series, her life is sketched in *Women Who Win*, by William Thayer.

‡ 1828–1906.

woman use, in company with man, in order to erase this blot from humanity's page of life.

On turning to women writers, two poets are acknowledged pre-eminent amid those Christian women who expressed their souls in song. The one thought that Christ

> " Who hath the heart of God sufficed
> Can satisfy all hearts, yea—thine and mine,"*

and refused two offers of marriage on account of diversity of religious opinions. The other's passion dwelt on earth, and said—

> " I love thee with the passion put to use
> In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
> I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
> With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
> Smiles, tears of all my life !—and if God choose
> I shall but love thee better after death."†

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe has perhaps exerted more widespread influence, with her *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, than any other writer in the United States, and that her work was done for the definite purpose of helping the defenceless, increases its value. It has been said‡ that " it was not fiction . . . it was stubborn fact."

The original of the " Lybian Sybil " § was a remarkable personality engaged in the anti-slavery campaign. Sojourner Truth lived to be over a hundred years of age, and as one who had suffered long years of slavery, and had borne thirteen children, most of whom she saw sold into slavery, she exercised an influence, with her commanding presence and deep

* From *Sonnets Written in Later Life*, by Christina Rossetti.
† *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
‡ By William Thayer, in *Women Who Win*.
§ There is a statue of her, by Story.

voice, that only experience can exert. She took Christianity simply and literally and was a grand example of what the Negro woman was capable.*

The United States has encouraged a type of woman almost unknown in other countries—the professional woman minister. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw was the first Pastor,† but at the present time over a thousand women preach and officiate in America. In England, Miss Maude Royden is the most well known and influential woman minister, and her activities in the sphere of religion have increased in recent years.

In connection with the United States, Mary Baker Eddy, the Founder of the Christian Science movement, may also be mentioned as an unusual product of Christianity about whom opinions are diverse.

After the latter half of the nineteenth century, the older Protestantism, that was the driving force of the women mentioned in the few preceding pages, gradually died, and the influences moulding European life since have contained other factors perhaps more important than the religious one, making it impossible to discuss woman merely from an aspect which was no longer divisible from others. At the present time, the various divisions of Christianity are kept alive by activities rather than by theology; one of these is the system of weekly or daily services at which the great majority of worshippers are women, especially

* An account of her is given in *The Story of the Negro*, by Booker T. Washington. The work contains a valuable chapter on "Negro Women and their Work," which gives a goodly array of negro women who have accomplished much that white people might be proud to claim as their achievement.

† At the Methodist Episcopal Church, Hingham, Mass., during 1878, and at East Denison, Mass., for the next seven years.

in the Church of England, and in France.* The Churches in America also have in their congregations a proportion of from two-thirds to three-fourths women,† and whatever country is noticed, the result shows that far more women than men attend religious services. The explanation is twofold; the one usually given is the greater conservation of woman, and this characteristic has its cogency, though it does not act alone. Ritual, or cult, appeals more to women than to men; they find in it an expression of æsthetic feeling which they possess in greater degree than men, whose ratiocinative faculty causes them to deal in words rather than in images. When the truth, or the logical meaning has gone, man is inclined to regard ritual as worthless; but imagery remains when theology is outworn, and to the poetry, and the beauty, woman instinctively clings, though she may not be conscious of the processes working in her soul. And here woman has probably indicated the future of religions: when creeds and literal beliefs have died, the legends and the imagery will remain to be incorporated in our imaginative and idealistic life, as has already been accomplished with regard to the myths of Greece.‡

Other means of permeating society with the Christian Creed, especially among the poorer sections, are the many Guilds and Societies which carry on social work in connection with the various religious denominations; here again women are predominant, especially in the

* See the statistics quoted by Joseph McCabe in his *Religion of Woman*, a book whose tone is marred by a prejudice against Christianity, which prevents him from seeing any good effects accruing from that religion.

† As estimated by Miss Susan B. Anthony.

‡ I am indebted for this idea to an article by F. J. Gould, in *The Hindustan Review* for September, 1915, on "The Future of Religions."

actual executive part of the organisations. As far as they go, such organisations, in spite of their restrictive element, undoubtedly effect a certain amount of useful work.

But the older Christianity is as undoubtedly out of touch with modern problems or events, both in regard to proposals for the solution of evils, or in the frank inquiry into basic causes. Herein is seen one reason for the loss of the influence erstwhile exerted by theology; thoughtful minds realise its inadequacy. The scientific spirit, fostering inquiry, also must be taken into account; in particular does this affect the young. And industrial and social conditions, with their pressing claims, cannot be overlooked as in mediæval times. Ancient sanctions are critically examined, and human consciousness requires a higher guide than "Thou shalt not." Evidences abound that the young and the labouring classes will not accept what once was sufficient; and on these hangs the fate of the future—on these and on woman. A trinity of hope is formed by these three: the spirit of Womanhood aspiring to the right; Labour, which upholds the world; and Children, who form the coming generations. With each are women linked, and their share in the shaping of the religion of the future will be no less great than it has been in moulding that of the past. But woman must learn to look at facts frankly, and to probe their meaning without fear, and without clinging to the sense of comfort given by hypothetical beliefs. She will then find that the function of the World-Religion is primarily not to seek after the saving of one's soul, as did the mediæval nuns, or even the souls of others as did the evangelists; nor to induce morbid questionings and a certain

priggishness in sensitive natures that mourn over their sins. But its function is to raise the fallen and prevent the occurrence of causes for more falls; to point to fair hills of progress in the far distance. In other words its function is to inspire its followers with the ambition to abolish poverty and disease from our earth, and to establish friendship; it is to provide a noble education for all the young, illumined by high ideals of service and truth, and permeated by an atmosphere of kindliness and common sense. And its character will not partake of definitions and theology fast-bound in unalterable creeds, but of poetic symbolism, of ritual, of beauty in its myriad forms. By it all the religions of the past will be honoured, and in its embrace will come all the races of the earth.

CHAPTER XII

SOME CONCLUSIONS.

Knowledge of psychology, history and sociology needed to give judgment on past.—No deliberate general suppression of women has occurred.—Woman's position been what as a whole they desired.—From earliest times feminine principle has been appreciated even if its full significance has not been recognised.—But women have not suffered degradation since days of old—an advancement has steadily come about.—Great average mass is the material for judgment.—Self-consciousness of women as a sex a comparatively late experience, and in early years problems and " movements " were non-existent.—Everywhere men and women have worked, suffered and risen together.—Impossible to consider one sex without the other, for they have influenced each other.—In religion woman has helped in establishing customs, propagating faiths, and conserving traditions.—Religion only one factor in vast human evolution and present civilisation contains many other elements.—Whole history reveals a great growth of the *human* spirit, struggling against material obstacles and its own shortcomings.—Throughout woman has shared in results, and will continue to do so in the future.

THE long survey is ended. It has brought us to a point of view that was perhaps unlooked for, and maybe a certain change of attitude has occurred, for the accumulation of facts and evidence has resulted in various conclusions incompatible with the one that regards woman as a down-trodden and ineffective creature. A pause should be made before statements concerning women in the past are put forth with inadequate knowledge of psychology, history, and sociology. Without a broad view of bygone ages,

neither a valuable criticism of the present, nor a reliable forecast of the future can be made. History builds on history, and each century adds its tribute to the riches of civilisation.

It must be understood that the conclusions which follow are quite general; individual cases could be cited which would disprove every general conclusion. Men here and there have deliberately harmed and suppressed women, just as women here and there have tyrannised over and been cruel to men. But these are not typical of the race, and in a survey of the whole world throughout the centuries, the individual loses his importance, and the great resulting complex of reactions is what matters, and what lives and forms the future.

So though cases have arisen wherein some men have wished to circumscribe woman's sphere with prohibitions, no *deliberate and general* suppression of womanhood has been attempted. Most men, occupied with their own problems and struggles, have left woman to work out her own salvation, which, in a merely feminist sense, she has been slow to begin, but which, in the sense of expressing her womanhood, she has been steadily doing all down the ages. Women more often than not have acquiesced in their restrictions, and disapprobation for straying from conventional paths comes in greater severity from women themselves. Taking into account the limitations caused by geographical and economic conditions, it may be stated that at any given time the position of women is what they, not in small groups, but collectively, desire. No conclusions can be true without the consideration of geographical and economic conditions, and it is very often these that circumscribe

activities and suppress aspirations, in men as well as women ; both have to bow to the facts of geography, and to the touch of poverty. A little thought will show the power of economics if the attempt is made to imagine the change in standards, attitudes, and actions if everyone were economically independent. Therefore to study merely what women may or may not do, what men say of them and their duties, and what rebellious spirits press for, without estimating the consequences of the environment and the social and financial position, will not give the knowledge that enables a comprehensive or just conclusion to be formed.

It is derogatory to the qualities of the woman spirit to think of it as always subordinated or in slavery. If that were so the question might well be asked : What has womanhood been doing during past ages ? Surely courage and will would have either freed it or killed it. Preceding chapters abound in instances of individuals who broke away from the trammels of conventionality ; in particular do the annals of ancient Greece bear testimony. But the majority of women did not wish to escape from tradition. Especially has this been the case in India, where even in the present day, the older women, who rule the homes, are exceedingly conservative in their insistence on all the old ideas and usages, and in their resistance to a wider education and ampler freedom for women. The conservative element in some women resists, often by mere inaction, the disturbers of the peace, however idealistic they may be, and it is the resultant of these two forces that places woman where she is in any particular age.

In the early years of civilisation masculine qualities

were the only ones that preserved the safety of the community and brought food to it; thus there has been a lack of appreciation of woman's sphere and capacities. But with a higher degree of civilisation it is recognised that feminine qualities enhance valuable traits of the race, and the qualities of intuition,* devotion, and morality possessed by womanhood are valued as factors in evolution. That intuition is a factor of vast importance in evolution has been shown by the greatest living philosopher,† and woman possesses more of that faculty than man. As intuition cannot explain itself in terms of logic, it has been depreciated until late years, except by artists who have said, "The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know." Of woman's capacity for devotion, to a person, to an ideal, to a mission, to a task, it is not necessary to speak much as it is generally acknowledged that without this quality

* See H. T. Buckle's *Influence of Women on the Progress of Knowledge.* The following extracts show his main idea:

"In regard to women being by nature more deductive, and men more inductive, you will remember that induction assigns the first place to particular facts; deduction to general propositions or ideas. Now, there are several reasons why women prefer the deductive, and, if I may say so, ideal method. They are more emotional, more enthusiastic, and more imaginative than men; they therefore live more in an ideal world; while men with their colder, harder, and austerer organisations, are more practical and more under the dominion of facts to which they consequently ascribe a higher importance.

"Another circumstance which makes women more deductive is that they possess more of what is called intuition. They cannot see so far as men can, but what they do see they see quicker. Hence they are constantly tempted to grasp at once an idea, and seek to solve a problem suddenly, in contradistinction to the slower and more laborious ascent of the inductive investigator . . . the insight into character possessed by women, and the fine tact for which they are remarkable, prove that they are more deductive than men. . . ."

† Henri Bergson, in his *Creative Evolution.*

expressed by woman, especially in the sphere of motherhood,* life and the world would be much poorer, and religions would flourish less. And in morality woman has always led in the sense of setting the standard inspiring to effort, conserving order, and presiding over manners.

Though it may not have been conscious, yet even from the earliest times of Egypt or Babylon appreciation of the feminine principle has been shown; and that honour was paid to the essentials of womanhood is indicated by the existence of feminine deities and the worship and prayers offered to them. If womanhood had been held lightly, the idea of worshipping a goddess would have been impossible; there would have been only gods, as in Judaism.†

But the fact that recognition was given to the intrinsic qualities of womanhood in days of old does not imply that woman has since suffered degradation. All things are relative, and nothing more so than the proportionate value of the regard paid to feminine essentials in the course of our civilisation. There has been no set back in the status of woman. When they realise that woman's position in the past has not been so low as they supposed, it is the practice of some reformers to declare that she has lost what power she once had. Besides being foolish, this attitude again depreciates woman; if she once had power, why did she let it go? The qualities in herself that gained the power for her should have sufficed to keep it. The mistake of thinking that woman has fallen from some high estate arises sometimes from

* See H. Dussage's *Gospel of Maternal Love*.

† An attempt has been made to prove that the earliest deity of the Hebrews, Shaddai, was a female, by M. A. Canney, in *The Expository Times* for April, 1923.

comparing exceptional cases in the past with the average case of to-day. But in order to obtain a true judgment *all* classes of women must be considered, and by that criterion the civilisation of ancient states is seen to be less advanced than that of our own time, if only through the existence of slavery, which is degrading to both manhood and womanhood. Even the poorest working woman of to-day has a freedom of movement and expression denied to the slave. In the sense that the weakest link in a chain is the measure of its strength, so the regard paid to the lowest women may estimate the status of the sex. Regarded in this light, it is seen that with the great average mass of women there has been advancement, as with men. Sometimes the flow has strayed into backwaters, and a period of stagnation has occurred, but in general woman has evolved, slowly, but surely, and the estimation in which her particular contribution to civilisation is held has risen with the appreciation of what that contribution has been, and of its value to humanity. If man has led in speculation and initiative, in discovery and the conquest of nature, woman has presided over morality and social custom, conservation and the conquest of the lower human nature.* The value of the masculine qualities was recognised first, of necessity, as they were the most prominent and the most obviously needed in the earlier ages. But the feminine qualities, less observed because less apparent and slower in their effect, are being recognised now, and have influenced the story of the race all along. For the non-appreciation of the full effect of the feminine principle in life does not necessarily mean its non-existence; whether

* For a discussion on the outward-moving qualities of man, and the inward-moving qualities of woman, see Ellen Key's *Love and Ethics.*

the past has recognised it or not, womanhood has woven its threads of devotion, and grace, and gentleness into the tissues of life. How strong those and other threads were, the standards of the past could not test—but no civilisation could be firm that was composed of unequal strands; no progress could be made and maintained without the aid of woman.

The self-consciousness of a sex is a comparatively modern experience, and it is futile to transpose the feelings and thoughts of a modern woman to one of ages long past. There was far less sensitiveness in every sphere of feeling, including sex; and far less restraint. Standards were different, and therefore our judgment should be different. In the days of ancient Greece and Rome "problems" seldom existed, and "movements" were not known. But the faculty of self-consciousness, new to womanhood as to humanity, is gradually causing us to give a certain guidance to our own evolution as a race, for we realise that our destiny is in our own hands, and it is with us a question of direction. More true than ever is it that women's position will be what they, collectively, desire, for self-conscious direction can now be given as never before. If we women wish to take our share *as a sex* we must glorify instead of deprecating "the eternal womanly"; that is, we must acknowledge that each sex has different qualities, which sometimes overlap, but which are best utilised in different ways, though the ways also may sometimes overlap. For women to wish to enter some sphere merely because men are there is childish; to wish to enter it because it affords a means of livelihood is not blameworthy; to wish to enter it because there they can serve human welfare is noble; and it is

as well to probe the motives which demand the open door.

History, considered as an evolution, shows that everywhere men and women have worked and suffered and risen together—the masculine has co-operated with the feminine in their slow advancement. It is impossible to consider the position of one sex without the other, since each lived by the same religion and in the same land. Even monks and nuns, had, as we have seen, their companions or ministrants of the opposite sex. In fact not only have the sexes worked together, but in a sense they have partly formed each other. Beginning from primitive times they have helped to mould one another's natures. Woman admired strength, initiative, courage; and man, in order to gain her approval cultivated those qualities already existent in himself. Man admired beauty, grace, gentleness, goodness; and woman responded by providing harmony and the moral factor. Thus selection of each other, and endeavours to fulfil each other's ideals had their power.

In the practice of religion duality also occurs; worship to divinities has been paid by women as well as men; in rituals and processions women had their place; the propagation of Mohammedanism and Christianity has been carried on by both sexes; women had their share in the formation of customs and traditions; and in the conservation of a religion women are more significant than men. As a sex women are more loath than men to leave an outworn faith; and in this they confer a certain benefit, by preserving ideals and ceremonies while others more worthy are establishing themselves. But the woman soul will learn that mere form cannot satisfy a moral

sense, and that supernatural sanctions alone are not sufficient for the twentieth century. Consciously or not, the human conscience, regarded collectively, depends more on itself than on outer sanctions.

But religion, as such, without other factors, could not elevate or degrade a sex ; no one factor could do it, for, just as the great world swings round the sun as a whole, and just as our personality is one whole, so is the sum of influences working upon womanhood to be regarded as a whole. Each influence—geographical conditions, economic position, religion, past history, masculine nature, feminine nature—reacts with the others, and none can be separated from the rest, though more attention may be directed to one than to the others, as has been attempted in this study. It has, however, been continually apparent that, as the centuries pass, sociological conditions become more complicated, and therefore causes and factors of progress more intermingled. As a result of all the forces, religion included, it is not found that woman has been dragging at a chain which man would not loosen. Chains there have been, but they have bound both men and women ; they have not been forged by one sex for the other, but by Nature and by human mistakes ; and they are being broken by united effort. Since religion, then, is only one factor in the vast history of humanity, human problems will never be solved by any one religion. A religion in the sense of supernaturalism stands for less now than it did a century ago, and our present civilisation contains many elements in addition to those contributed by Christianity, Hinduism, or Islam. Even in past ages religion was not the sole factor determining woman's status, although every religion, if sincere

and idealistic, raised her position in raising that of society in general and its moral evaluations. Religion in essence is an uplifting force, limited by dogma and codes. It has been man's province to frame the dogma and codes; his judgment throughout time has been mainly expressed in Law or Theology, and it is based on logic. Woman's judgment is chiefly based on feeling, or intuition, and is expressed in morality or social custom. Both are necessary in evolution, but not until the chains of dogma are broken will woman be psychologically emancipated. As has been said,* "Our poetry will have to reinforce our logic, and we must feel as much as we must argue." But woman's activities are restrained by other limitations, such as undeveloped moral qualities, human mistakes, and—an important consideration—economics. None of the religions which have been studied could be abstracted from the social conditions in which they spread. The whole history reveals a great growth of the *human* spirit struggling against material obstacles and its own shortcomings. Throughout this growth woman has shared in the struggles and failures and successes; her part has been distinct from, yet parallel with man's. So it will prove in the future, for nothing can frustrate the evolutionary movement nor prevent humanity as a whole from attaining and achieving its purpose. What that purpose may be, and what the religion that will inspire towards it may be, is left to the present and succeeding generations to determine. In the drama woman will play her part, as conserver of noble traditions, as moulder of youthful aspirations, and as establisher of moral standards and appreciations.

* By H. T. Buckle.

THE END

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